United Nations

A/65/PV.4

General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

4th plenary meeting
Monday, 20 September 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

Co-Chair: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session)
Co-Chair: Mr. Joseph Deiss ..... (President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals

Agenda items 13 and 115 (*continued*)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/65/L.1)

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I wish to bring the following matter to the attention of Member States.

Members will recall that, in accordance with Assembly resolution 64/184 of 21 December 2009, it was decided that the afternoon meeting,

> "on Monday, 20 September 2010 ... will ... have 50 speaking slots" and that "[t]he initial list of speakers for the High-level Plenary Meeting ... will be established at a meeting to be scheduled in the month of May 2010" (*resolution 64/184, annex I, paras. 4 and 6*).

Furthermore, it was also decided that,

> "when each category of speakers is organized following the order resulting from the selection process ... the list of speakers for each meeting will be rearranged in accordance with the established practice of the General Assembly:
>
> (a) Heads of State will thus be accorded first priority, followed by Heads of Government; vice-presidents, crown princes/princesses; the highest-ranking official of the Holy See, in its capacity as observer State, and of Palestine, in its capacity as observer; ministers; and permanent representatives" (*ibid., para. 7*).

It was also decided that,

> "Without prejudice to other organizations which have observer status in the General Assembly, a representative of each of the following may also be included in the list of speakers for the plenary meetings of the High-level Plenary Meeting:
>
> League of Arab States
>
> African Union
>
> European Union
>
> Organization of the Islamic Conference
>
> World Conference of Speakers of Parliament of the Inter-Parliamentary Union." (*ibid., para. 9*)

Those organizations, which have observer status, are very active and vital in coordinating activities in the field of development. With the consent of the Assembly and without setting a precedent, I would

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

10-54115 (E)

Please recycle

therefore like to give the floor to these five observers at the end of this meeting, after representatives of Member States have spoken.

It was so decided.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ivo Josipović, President of the Republic of Croatia.

President Josipović: Ten years ago, a historic moment for the United Nations occurred. In adopting the Millennium Declaration, 189 Member States took the decisive step to address the fundamental problem of unequal global development. By laying the foundation for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world, our collective vision was to redress this inequality and to offer hope to the world.

We clearly committed ourselves to implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) before 2015, by which time we would eradicate hunger and poverty and address maternal and infant mortality and diseases. To that end, we needed to eliminate gender inequality, create a universal right to primary education, and prevent further environmental degradation.

The Millennium Declaration, as a road map for the twenty-first century, laid the foundation for a global partnership for development. This partnership was to be fostered by a spirit of shared responsibility and solidarity by which the developed world, on its part, pledged to make available and transfer requisite knowledge and resources to meet development needs.

Developing countries resolved themselves to apply assistance in a rational and effective manner so as to enable their populations to gradually free themselves from abject and inhuman conditions of poverty. Under the Declaration, each Member State became accountable at the national level and assumed collectively responsibility at the global level. It is very clear today that we are witnesses to the fact that these obligations are increasingly indivisible and interdependent.

Despite significant achievements during 10 years of implementation, the Secretary-General and others have rightly highlighted that, where progress has been made, it has been only partial and sporadic. Today's meeting to assess what it will take in the remaining five years to achieve the MDGs is taking place in completely new circumstances. Moreover, we must factor into our deliberations trends that are seriously impeding our efforts.

In today's world, not one country has escaped the negative impact of the global financial and economic crisis. This crisis, which has affected us all with such extraordinary speed, has produced consequences that we will have to bear for a significant time to come.

Moreover, although States are on track globally to meet the poverty-related MDG targets, poverty levels are on the rise, even in countries where poverty was not previously prevalent. These signs serve as important warnings not to further derail from our collective promises. Even the slightest shortfall in the implementation of the MDGs, which enshrine all basic human rights, will mean that we did not succeed. I am convinced that this ought not to be the message of this meeting.

Over the past two years, especially in the developed world, substantial efforts have been made towards curtailing the decline of national GDPs to create the preconditions for initiating a new cycle of development. However, this process is not without serious social implications. Despite our commitment under the MDGs to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, the current unemployment trends that are affecting all countries irrespective of their level of development are being contained at an exceptionally slow pace. Furthermore, social stress on populations has not been averted and structural reforms at the national level are painful and often unacceptable to them.

Despite these circumstances, Croatia remains committed to the full implementation of the MDGs at the national and global levels. By virtue of the world's current global character, the consequences of falling short of the Millennium agenda will impact us all. Croatia has continued to approach the implementation of the MDGs with strong resolve despite the difficulties that have evolved over the past decade. We have prepared two implementation reports, and this year we compiled an overview of our achievements to date, the summary of which is currently available, including at tais meeting.

By way of contributing to the deliberations, I would like to highlight the context in which progress has been made in Croatia. Like Europe as a whole, Croatia is contending with multiple economic

difficulties that have caused growth and development rates to decline. It is no longer as simple as it was to secure domestic and foreign resources to invest in vital projects targeted at education, health, environmental protection and employment.

On its path of transformation, and inspired by European ideals, Croatia has to date invested significant effort and resources in the implementation of the MDGs. Driven in particular by global and European processes, Croatia has been actively dealing with numerous environmental protection issues. Croatia is rich in natural resources including sea, surface water, air, forests and soil. We have embarked on numerous reforms in all areas of environmental protection. We are certain that these efforts, financed from national resources, are essential preconditions for creating a new cycle of sustained development.

As a new sovereign State, Croatia embarked on its development path as a donor-recipient country. We deeply appreciate the valuable efforts by the international community during that period. After only eighteen years, Croatia has graduated and become a donor country.

Ahead of us lie new challenges. As all history has shown, we shall have to deal with them and find ways to overcome them. Moreover, it is a great imperative of these times that we undertake our efforts collectively in a spirit of understanding, tolerance, dialogue and solidarity. Therefore, during this High-level Plenary Meeting, we, as world leaders, must find viable, durable and affordable solutions for all.

To conclude, I call upon all of us to make constructive efforts over the next few days towards a successful outcome of this Meeting. If used wisely, such an outcome will lay the foundations for ensuring a better future for all.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar.

Sheikh Al-Thani (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session and wish you every success in your mission.

I would also like to express our thanks to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki, for his tireless work in the previous session, and our appreciation to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his efforts in promoting the role of the United Nations and the realization of its objectives.

We meet today to review progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at a very critical time, when the world economy continues to suffer from one of its most severe setbacks since the Depression of the 1930s. The global economic crisis has had a negative impact on the international community's efforts towards achievement of the MDGs in poor developing countries. The reduction of development assistance and foreign direct investment has adversely affected those countries' development programmes and policies in general, and the health and education sectors and the battle against poverty and hunger in particular.

We regret to note that the record of achievements at the global level is uneven. United Nations reports indicate that, on the one hand, a number of developing countries have registered some concrete achievements in macroeconomic management, resulting in an increase in investments and savings; on the other, many developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have yet to realize most of the MDGs. The number of people suffering from poverty exceeded one billion in 2009. This should be a matter of concern for each one of us.

Ultimately, the realization of the MDGs is not only necessary for building a better life for millions of people but is also essential for international peace and security. The achievement of all internationally agreed development goals depends primarily on the vitality of our global partnership, which we agreed on at the Monterrey Conference and reconfirmed at the Doha Conference in December 2008. The leaders of the Group of Eight (G8) agreed in 2005 to provide, by 2010, additional aid worth 50 billion dollars, 25 billion of which would be earmarked for Africa.

They identified new targets for universal access to treatment of AIDS, universal primary education and free basic health care. Again, in 2007, the G8 leaders reconfirmed their commitment to increase development assistance and announced an additional 60 billion dollars to combat AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

The achievement of the MDGs requires that each of the parties to the partnership carry out its

obligations. It requires that developing countries adopt comprehensive national strategies, promote good governance, fight corruption, promote sustainable economic growth and create an attractive environment for foreign direct investment. They are required to act to engage civil society organizations and the private sector in such programmes. Furthermore, they should also mobilize the necessary financial resources, act to establish a clear system for government accountability and focus on increasing awareness of the importance of achieving those goals.

In contrast, developed countries should face the global financial crisis and work to achieve the MDGs through mobilizing international resources, undertaking further comprehensive reforms to ensure the stability of the international financial system, reducing the distortions of international trade, maintaining the credibility of their commitments to increase official development assistance and issuing timetables for monitoring the implementation of their commitments vis-à-vis developing countries.

The delay in negotiations in the Doha Round, which was scheduled to finish by the end of June 2006, was a huge disappointment for developing countries, which have continued to attach great hopes to that Round. Therefore, countries involved in the negotiations ought to focus on establishing a multilateral trade system of openness, fairness and non-discrimination.

Qatar has realized most of the Millennium Development Goals and is on track to achieve all of them before 2015. The State has provided free basic educational opportunities for different groups in the society without discrimination between males and females. Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women has led the State to eliminate disparity between the sexes at various stages of their education, which in turn has led to an increased rate of enrolment in favour of girls at all levels of education. The State has also eliminated gender disparities in access to job opportunities.

In the area of health, Qatar is among the world's most progressive countries in the reduction of child mortality and the improvement of maternal health, thanks to the country's provision of universal free health care for all. Developments such as these in the areas of health and education are reflected in the State of Qatar's ranking among countries with high human development, according to United Nations reports on that subject.

In this context, Qatar National Vision 2030 emphasizes four pillars that address all of the MDGs: The first is human development, which involves the establishment of advanced health and education systems that provide the highest quality services and workforce growth. The second pillar is social development, which involves the development of a fair and safe society and the promotion of the role of women. The third pillar is economic development, which involves the development of a diversified, competitive and sustainable economy, the optimal utilization of oil and gas resources, and sound economic management. The fourth pillar is environmental development, which involves a balance between immediate needs and the requirements of environmental conservation, for which we have created a special Ministry. In the process of the activation and elaboration of these pillars, the State of Qatar is currently preparing its first National Development Strategy (2011-2016).

Qatar is keen to sponsor efforts to promote participation and cooperation for development, particularly in relation to combating poverty and disseminating the fruits of global growth in a more just and equitable manner. In this regard, at the Second South Summit in June 2005, the State of Qatar put forward an initiative to create a fund aimed at development in the South that would support anti-poverty programmes in developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in order help them to achieve the MDGs.

Qatar has also stressed its commitment to allocating the specified percentage of its gross national income to development aid, while allocating 15 per cent thereof to the least developed countries. This aid is in addition to humanitarian aid and relief assistance in emergencies and disasters. The volume of Qatari development aid and assistance has witnessed a significant increase — in 2009, it reached about $382 million, not counting contributions to the various United Nations funds, such as the United Nations Democracy Fund.

The State of Qatar has also sought to achieve global partnership through ratification of several international and regional agreements and treaties concerning international development issues, as well as

through the adoption of an open trading system and the creation of an attractive environment for foreign investment.

Through Silatech, an institution with a capital of $100 million that addresses unemployment problems in the Middle East and North Africa via programmes aimed at the rehabilitation and training of young people in that part of the world, and through Education Above All, an institution created by the Qatar Foundation in 2008 to protect, support and promote the right to education in areas suffering from or threatened by crises, conflicts and wars, Qatar has supported numerous initiatives for cooperation with developing countries designed to set up and implement strategies that offer young people decent and productive employment.

In the area of combating corruption, we in Qatar have taken many important steps to respond to international efforts in that regard. We moved to ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption and have taken many steps to put the Convention into effect, including through the establishment of the National Committee for Integrity and Transparency. We have acted to ensure that all the Committee's needs are met in order to allow it to carry out its tasks with full objectivity and independence. Indeed, in the general ranking of Transparency International, Qatar is ranked high among all countries in the fight against corruption, and it has placed first among Arab countries.

In the area of international cooperation, the State of Qatar hosted the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in 2001, which in turn resulted in the Doha Round, as well as the South Summit in 2005 and the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in 2006.

The State of Qatar hosted the first follow-up conference of the International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus during the period from 30 November to 2 December 2008. At that time, the Conference was considered particularly important because, since the Monterrey Conference in 2002, the international arena had witnessed numerous developments, challenges and issues that required open dialogue and innovative solutions.

At the political level, Qatari efforts to bring peace to Darfur, in coordination with the United Nations-African Union Joint Chief Mediator have begun to bear fruit. Two agreements have been signed: a ceasefire agreement and a framework agreement for peace in Darfur. Despite the withdrawal of one of the armed factions from the Doha meetings, negotiations are still in full swing and efforts continue to be made to reach a final peace agreement.

In order to support development and reconstruction efforts in the Darfur region, we announced last 23 February the establishment of a bank for the development of Darfur with a capital of $1 billion to be contributed by interested countries and organizations in order to advance development there.

We are required now more than ever to develop a common vision and search for effective mechanisms to mobilize energies in order to help poor countries in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Head of State of the Kingdom of Morocco.

King Mohammed VI (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to attend this High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I should like first to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for ensuring that development issues are a top priority in the Organization's programme of action.

Ten years ago we adopted the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) as a common consensus agreement to ensure globally consistent and sustainable human development. The question on everyone's mind today is: what specific goals have been achieved under that historic declaration? In a spirit of responsibility and frankness, we should use this meeting to pose that question and to make an objective assessment of what has been accomplished, and to identify the obstacles that need to be overcome in devising the strategies needed to achieve the MDGs by 2015. This momentous challenge calls for responsibilities to be shouldered collectively: not only by our partners among the developed countries, which have to honour their obligations with respect to financing development projects, but also by the developing nations, which have to ensure that the MDGs take centre stage in their national policies.

This is precisely the course of action that Morocco has embarked on. In 2005 we launched our national initiative for human development. The initiative rests on an inclusive, consultation-based approach, participatory democracy — a system of governance that is founded on close proximity to the citizens — as well as on the deep, active involvement of the actors concerned in the initiative's projects, seeking to address shortcomings in social development efforts by creating jobs and income-generating activities.

Thanks to this bold initiative, and to the in-depth reforms, sectoral plans and major workshops that it has triggered, Morocco has made great progress towards the accomplishment of the MDGs, in particular with regard to fighting poverty, precarious conditions and social exclusion, as well as improving people's living conditions in both urban and rural areas, especially by ensuring widespread access to electricity and drinking water.

Concurrently, a compulsory medical insurance scheme has been established in our country, along with a health coverage plan to assist the needy and vulnerable. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Morocco has made a sovereign decision with regard to gender equality in the areas of the family, health, education and the job market, as well as ensuring enhanced representation and active participation of women in political institutions and public life. The policy of making primary education available to all has resulted in 93 per cent of children between 6 and 11 years of age being enrolled in school. Moreover, in 2008 we adopted an emergency response plan to speed up reform of our education and training system.

Given the importance we attach to the environmental dimension in development projects, we have been able to take successful measures to protect the environment and to combat climate change. Similarly, and in order to promote sustainable human development through the optimal use of clean and renewable energy technologies, we have launched a groundbreaking solar energy plan and an integrated programme for wind-power production. Through these two projects, Morocco will be able to generate 42 per cent of its energy needs from clean, renewable sources by 2020.

The common commitment we made at the Millennium Summit has changed the lives of millions of people who are now enjoying their right to education, health care, employment and a dignified life. However, can mankind's conscience remain indifferent to the plight of the more than 1 billion people who continue to suffer from hunger, and to that of the millions of children who die annually from malnutrition, as well as from diseases and epidemics for which treatment is both available and affordable? Certainly not. Such a bitter reality simply cannot be tolerated. Not only is it inconsistent with the principles of the revealed religions, of democracy and of international conventions; it also contradicts the lofty human ideals of brotherhood, solidarity and justice. Sadly, this situation is being exploited to foment hatred and fuel extremism.

To promote a global partnership based on solidarity, Morocco has made human development and the achievement of the MDGs the core of a practical, innovative South-South cooperation policy, especially with regard to sister African nations. I believe that a firm political commitment made by all countries and supported by a global, specific partnership mechanism with a clear implementation timetable, provides the best guarantee for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

At the same time, we need to anticipate potential problems, and to start thinking proactively about the broad lines of our actions beyond 2015, so as to ensure the continuity of our endeavours and to be prepared to meet new challenges. We should do this through collective action to strengthen the foundations of a global, harmonious, solidarity-based system to promote sustainable human development in which efficient, equitable governance should play a key role, so that we may offer future generations a dignified life and build a future of peace, stability, progress and prosperity for all.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

President Rahmon (*spoke in Tajik; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): Ten years ago in this Hall we adopted the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the fundamental document that identified the major directions of the efforts the international community was to make at the dawn of a new century. The key importance of the

Declaration lies in the fact that it defined a set of practical objectives and goals aimed at the development of each individual, and at meeting the needs of the most vulnerable populations, in particular children, to whom the future belongs.

Today, 10 years later, it is of extreme importance not only to discuss the progress achieved and identify the shortfall in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) laid down in the Declaration but also to work out specific measures for further accelerating and strengthening efforts towards the timely and complete achievement of the MDGs. It is especially important at present, when already unsustainable and uneven progress is being undermined by the food, energy and financial and economic crises.

Climate change and its adverse impact, which appear to be gaining momentum today, confront us with additional complex tasks, which are impossible to address without concerted joint efforts by the entire international community. Given these new challenges and the increasing interconnection and interdependence, we deem it essential to accelerate the implementation of the commitments made at the beginning of the new millennium.

Tajikistan is one of the eight pilot countries that were identified for the implementation of the MDGs. Our country therefore adopted the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2015. As the country's major strategic document the National Development Strategy identifies priorities and major directions for Government policy aimed at achieving sustainable economic growth, easing access by the population to basic social services reducing and poverty. That document provides an essentially new approach towards ensuring of development. It takes into account world experience in the preparation and implementation of similar strategic documents and lessons and conclusions gained during previous stages of our country's development, and it addresses the current realities and prospects for development.

Moreover, the National Development Strategy serves as a basis for all existing and developing concepts for the Government and economic sectors, for the country's development strategies and programmes and for the activities of all governmental managerial bodies, including the third Midterm Strategy for Poverty Reduction 2010-2012. As a result of the implementation of the measures envisaged by the National Development Strategy, we have already managed to considerably reduce poverty in our country.

Currently, about half of the Tajikistan Government budget is channelled to the social sector, predominantly to education and health care. At the same time, I would like to note that the potential for Government financing of the social sector is restricted by the rate of growth of the real national economy, which has slowed down in recent years due to the impact of the global financial and economic crisis, natural disasters and artificially created barriers to the normal functioning of transport corridors. Today, the Government of Tajikistan is undertaking extra measures with the aim of mitigating the negative impact and not to allow social sector funding to be reduced, as well as to take systematic advantage of its own potential for economic growth. These measures will expand the possibility of funding the social sector and providing access to basic social services, and will eventually ensure the achievement of all the MDGs. As a result of such measures, for instance, the number of children attending elementary and high school has increased, and the quality of social services offered to the population has improved.

Among the key factors contributing to the acceleration of progress in MDG implementation, in addition to the mobilization of internal resources, is the creation of a favourable international environment for achieving sustainable development. This is especially important at the current stage, when the consequences of the global financial and economic crisis have not been completely dealt with, and when the necessity of accelerating reform of the international finance system is still relevant and of critical importance.

It is essential that reform of the international finance system not only strengthen the system but also help give extra impetus to the reactivation of world trade and investment, which are the driving force behind world economic development and increased employment. Measures must focus on creating favourable external conditions and strengthening global partnerships which promote timely and complete achievement of the MDGs. These measures must not increase countries' external debt burden, which remains one of the most serious obstacles to progress.

Ensuring access to energy for everyone can be a key prerequisite for accelerating progress on MDGs implementation. We believe that this issue should be given priority alongside the MDGs themselves. In this regard, we support the initiative to provide universal access to modern energy services by 2030. The major challenge today is how to ensure access to energy while giving due consideration to the continuing growth of the Earth's population and to reducing anthropogenic impacts on climate.

In our view, these goals do not give rise to a dilemma; to the contrary, they provide opportunities for new cooperation. In this regard, we consider it essential that reliable and stable access to energy be accompanied by advocacy for a larger share of renewable energy worldwide, for the transfer of new and advanced technologies for and enhanced energy efficiency. Comprehensive development of hydropower engineering, coupled with the use of the potential of other types of renewable energy such as solar and wind, would not only enable us to provide access to energy but would also contribute to the stability and efficiency of energy systems and to a considerable decrease in harmful emissions into the air. The latter are key objectives for MDG implementation and for mitigating the impact of climate change.

Today, Tajikistan, which has enormous hydropower potential, is continuously increasing its efforts towards comprehensive development of hydropower engineering. Currently, a number of small, medium and large hydropower stations are under construction in the country. They are intended not only for energy generation but also for irrigation, which is of importance for the entire Central Asian region. In our view, effective development of our country's hydro-energy potential is an important factor that could have a multiplier effect on enhancing progress and ensuring success.

Water is a vitally important resource that links all the MDGs. Increasing water scarcity and climate change, which affects water resources, add growing urgency to the issues of water delivery to people and to water-dependent economic sectors. Lack of access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, human deaths caused by water-borne diseases and unsanitary conditions, droughts and desertification threaten the source of subsistence for a huge number of people on our planet. The breadth of these and other problems related to water resources was the focus of attention and discussion among participants at the International Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, held at the initiative of Tajikistan in its capital city, Dushanbe, from 8 to 10 June 2010. The Dushanbe Declaration on Water, the outcome document of the conference, was approved by the representatives of more than 75 countries. It contains a number of recommendations, including the following: to develop adequate policies and allocate sufficient funds for the water sector; to gradually and sequentially introduce integrated management of water resources at the river basin level; to pay greater attention to issues related to ensuring access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; to take measures for adaptation to ongoing global changes, including climate change; to improve the monitoring system for glaciers and freshwater resources; more concerted actions by all stakeholders at all levels with the aim of incorporating the water issue into national development plans and programmes; to increase the involvement of women in the decision-making process on water resources; and to increase financing and strengthen cooperation, including the development of water diplomacy. We are convinced that those recommendations will be a worthy contribution to the implementation of the action agenda for achieving the MDGs by 2015.

It is necessary to note that the new challenges emerging in today's world demand the international community's undivided attention. For instance, in recent years the disparity in the development of the economies of developed and developing countries has significantly increased, hampering the process of integration. For that reason, it is necessary to take measures to strengthen the global partnership, with the aim of consolidating the efforts of all members of the international community without exception.

In conclusion, I would like to note that, 10 years ago, the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration became a powerful incentive for all of us. Today, on the eve of the last five years remaining for the achievement of the Goals, I am convinced that the MDGs can be attained. We must urgently make every effective and comprehensive effort to that end.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey.

President Gül: It is a great honour to address this High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his dedication to drawing attention to the global challenges of development. His leadership has certainly created the much-needed political momentum towards the timely achievement of the MDGs.

The Millennium Development Goals have provided a solid framework for development in the past decade. Global challenges, including the economic and financial crisis and the adverse impacts of climate change, have made them even more pertinent today.

Five years from the deadline, there is an urgent need to reaffirm our commitment and strengthen our partnership in order to meet the Goals on time. Our efforts should not be limited to Government activities. We must also rally non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector around a revitalized development agenda. We must attach equal importance to each and every goal. It is also crucial that the MDGs are dealt with as one holistic package in order to create synergies between all the Goals. I therefore believe that it is important to work along the following guidelines.

Our overarching objective must remain the eradication of poverty and hunger. We need to adopt strategies in favour of the poor and vulnerable. Investment in agriculture is essential to ensure food security. We need to make progress on gender equality and women's empowerment. There should be more emphasis on education and health. We need to pursue environmental sustainability with stronger political commitment and action. We should acknowledge mutually reinforcing relations among the notions of democracy, development and security. I should underline that these guidelines are drawn from Turkey's own experience in development as an emerging economy.

Turkey is well on its way towards achieving the MDGs. We have adopted the Goals as our primary national development goals and integrated them in our development plans. In recent years, we have introduced ambitious and comprehensive social welfare programmes to improve the living standards of vulnerable segments of our society. Those policies have proven to be very effective and sustainable, with solid financial resources to support them.

We are on track towards reaching a 100 per cent rate of primary school enrolment, thanks to direct payments given to mothers to promote the enrolment of girls in school. We have recorded significant progress on maternal and child health by implementing free pre-maternal health check-ups and compulsory vaccination programmes. With the introduction of a new social security system, our citizens now enjoy universal health coverage.

We have also provided extensive scholarship programmes for students of limited financial means, in all levels of education. We have taken every measure to contain HIV and have provided access to treatment for those who need it. In recent years, more than 500,000 new houses have been built by the State-owned housing development administration. Comprehensive measures and important policies have been introduced for environmental sustainability.

As part of our commitment to the MDG agenda, we hosted a regional review meeting in Istanbul last June, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. The conclusions of that review provided significant input to this High-level Plenary Meeting.

Turkey stands ready to lend its full support to the global partnership for development. Development issues now form an integral part of our broad foreign policy agenda. As a reliable partner in development, our focus is particularly on least developed countries (LDCs). In order to deliver on our pledges to LDCs, in recent years we have increased our official development assistance. With the contribution of Turkish NGOs, our overall development assistance exceeds $1.5 billion annually.

In 2007, as Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, I had the pleasure and privilege of hosting in Istanbul my counterparts from least developed countries at the United Nations Ministerial Conference on Least Developed Countries. Once again, we feel privileged to host the fourth such United Nations Ministerial Conference next year. We hope that this meeting will generate strong political momentum and new partnerships to address the persistent challenges of LDCs in the next decade. I look forward to the support of world leaders in that regard.

While we may not have too much time left for progress towards the MDGs, we certainly have the will

and capacity to achieve them. But we need to act now, and act swiftly. Let us commit here once again to join our efforts in reaching our common goals. But let us not forget that our partnership and solidarity for development must continue beyond 2015. We must continue with a new and enhanced development agenda. This must be our pledge to future generations.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Choummaly Sayasone, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

President Sayasone (*spoke in Lao; English text provided by the delegation*): At the outset, I would like to join other speakers in extending my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss and His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki on their elections as Co-Chairs of the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I would also like to thank His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and all United Nations agencies for extending their utmost efforts in assisting United Nations Member States to attain the MDGs throughout the past decade.

Ten years ago in this Assembly Hall, we the world leaders adopted our shared commitment to realizing the MDGs by 2015. On the whole, important progress and outcomes have been achieved in the implementation of the MDGs at the global level. Nevertheless, if we take a closer look at the results of implementation of the goals at country level, the wide achievement gap remains unchanged. Moreover, the gap is ever widening, due to the fact that countries throughout the world have encountered daunting challenges caused by such crises as climate change and economic and financial turmoil, which have also posed major constraints on attaining the MDGs.

Only five years remain for us to prove that we can live up to our joint commitment to achieve the MDGs. Therefore, at this most important gathering we should discuss and exchange views on best practices and good lessons learned so that we may adopt firmer measures with a view to accelerating implementation so as to achieve the MDGs in the next five years.

In 2003, the Lao Government adopted a national growth and poverty eradication strategy, which was later mainstreamed into the sixth five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan for the period 2006 to 2010. By implementing the five-year plans, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been able to achieve sustained economic growth while establishing a strong foundation for the country to make important progress towards the MDGs.

Through implementation of the fifth five-year Plan for 2001 to 2005, we achieved an annual economic growth rate of 6.2 per cent. By executing the sixth Plan for 2006-2010, we expect to attain an annual economic growth rate of 7 per cent — a key factor in reducing the poverty rate from the 48 per cent recorded in 1990 to 26 per cent in 2009.

In addition, the social and cultural sectors have also achieved satisfactory results, including the improved enrolment rate of children in primary school from 58 per cent in 1991 to 84 per cent in 2005. The maternal mortality rate dropped from 650 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1995 to 405 in 2005. During the same period, the infant mortality rate also went down from 104 per 1,000 live births to 70. Likewise, the status of women in general has risen, as indicated by the 25 per cent representation of woman parliamentarians in the National Assembly. Such achievements would not have been possible without the adoption of sound policies and appropriate measures, combined with assistance from the international community.

Despite such laudable achievements, the Lao People's Democratic Republic still needs to overcome numerous challenges. As a vulnerable and least developed country, it has also been affected by the financial and economic crisis and the impact of climate change, which have all posed major constraints on our achievement of the MDGs. Against this backdrop, we must redouble our efforts to mobilize resources from both domestic and external sources for advancing some key sectors, especially human resource capacity, the education system and infrastructure, in particular in relation to transportation and communication.

Drawing from the lessons learned throughout the past 10 years, it is clear that all domestic forces have played a critical part in attaining the MDGs. However, without the valuable support and assistance of the international community, it would have been far more difficult for the Lao People's Democratic Republic to overcome the challenges and achieve the targets set.

On this note, I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks and sincere appreciation to the international community, especially to the donor and

friendly countries, and international organizations for their continued support and assistance to the Lao People's Democratic Republic over the years. We hope that such invaluable support and cooperation will continue in the future.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Bingu Wa Mutharika, President of the Republic of Malawi.

President Mutharika: I am glad to say that the news of Africa's progress in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is encouraging. African Governments are making heroic efforts to meet the targets by 2015.

The Millennium Development Goal reports for African countries show a thorough and realistic assessment of Africa's possibility of attaining MDG targets by the year 2015, as well as the challenges that we are facing in Africa. The 2010 reports also demonstrate that many countries are committed to meeting the MDGs.

However, my address is confined to my own country, Malawi. Malawi is confident that we shall meet all eight MDGs in varying degrees. This is largely because Malawi has fully embraced the MDGs in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, which is our main overarching policy for development. It was designed in a manner such that it addresses all the MDGs. Thus, in implementing our own national Strategy, we are also implementing all the MDGs.

The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy focuses on nine main priorities. These are agriculture and food security; irrigation and water development; transport and infrastructure development; education, science and technology; energy, mining and industrial development; integrated rural development; climate change, natural resources and environment management; youth development and empowerment; and the management of HIV and AIDS. All of these bear on our ability to implement the Millennium Development Goals.

I am glad to report that five of the eight Goals will definitely be achieved and even surpassed. These are eradicating extreme poverty; reducing infant mortality; combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development. However, for the other three goals — universal primary education, reducing gender inequality and reducing maternal mortality — a more concerted effort will have to be applied to achieve them.

In the effort to eradicate extreme poverty, indicators show that the percentage of the poor declined from 15 per cent in 2000 to nearly 9 per cent in 2009. Notable among the reasons for this progress has been the continued targeted Farm Inputs Subsidy Programme. We provided 5 billion Malawi kwacha for the Malawi Rural Development Fund, which targeted the poor. We also established the One Village One Product scheme to encourage people to add value to agricultural products, and we have recently established a 3-billion kwacha Youth Enterprise Development Fund.

The goal of reducing child mortality will be attained and surpassed. The under-five mortality rate was reduced from 189 deaths per 1,000 in 2000 to 122 in 2009. This goal will be attained as the provision of health services continues to improve in all parts of our country.

With regard to halting HIV and AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases, Malawi will attain those objectives. The HIV prevalence rate declined from 24 per cent in 2000 to 12 per cent in 2009. We have also reduced other diseases, such as tuberculosis and malaria, and the trend shows that Malawi will reverse their incidence by the year 2015.

The goal of ensuring environmental sustainability is also on course, and the Government is putting in place adequate measures so that the country's land area covered by forest will be increased. During the past six years, we have planted over half a billion trees as part of our reforestation programme.

The number of households with sustainable access to improved water resources has been increasing, and the MDG target will be surpassed by about 20 per cent. The achievement of universal primary education will also be made. In Malawi, primary school education has been free for more than 10 years, and the net enrolment rate has gone up to about 83 per cent. The Government is continuing to expand teacher training colleges, constructing additional colleges to improve the quality and increase the number of qualified teachers in primary schools, constructing new classrooms to reduce the pupil-per-

classroom ratio, and scaling up school feeding programmes.

In connection with the Goal of improving maternal health, we are now focusing on achieving the desired MDG target of 155 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2015. In this regard, the Government is constructing and upgrading health facilities to offer essential health services, particularly focusing on rural and underserved areas and training health personnel.

Malawi has achieved considerable progress in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. More women now hold high positions, such as those of the Vice-President of the country, the Attorney General, heads of important Government institutions, cabinet positions and ambassadorial positions. Also, the number of women among Members of Parliament more than doubled in the most recent general election. The country is constructing and expanding girls' boarding facilities in secondary schools, improving teacher training and encouraging girls to pursue education in fields that have traditionally been dominated by men, such as science, technology and mathematics. We are also taking affirmative action to increase the number of women in high-level decision-making positions.

In summary, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy shows that we are making continuous progress towards achieving the MDGs. Ultimately, the efforts of the Malawi Government, the private sector, development partners and civil society will all need to be harnessed to ensure that the progress that has already been made is maintained.

For Africa as a whole, we strongly appeal to the United Nations to review the supply side to improve the access of ordinary people, especially women and children, to the services envisaged under the Millennium Development Goals. Most of the Goals depend on the availability of more schools, more hospitals, more rural infrastructure, more boreholes, dams and wells, more trained teachers, more doctors, more nurses, more agronomists and more trained civil servants. We need teaching and learning materials; we need school feeding programmes; we need extensive immunization programmes. These need to be produced as part of the MDG agenda. I said that when I addressed the General Assembly in 2005, and I have constantly said so. I am saying it again. Let us pay attention to the supply side of the Millennium Development Goals if they are to be attained by 2015.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, President of Turkmenistan.

President Berdimuhamedov (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the people and Government of Turkmenistan, I cordially welcome and congratulate participants on the beginning of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I wish to congratulate Mr. Joseph Deiss on his election as President of the Assembly and to express confidence that the Assembly will work successfully and fruitfully under his leadership. I also express our gratitude to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, for his effective activity in that post.

This year our country is preparing to widely celebrate a remarkable date — the fifteenth anniversary of Turkmenistan's neutrality. It was within the walls of the United Nations that our desire to be a neutral, peaceful, non-aligned country acquired the support of the whole international community and became a reality. Throughout all the years since then Turkmenistan has remained committed to that choice, based on a clear understanding of its role and place in today's world and the strict fulfilment of its international obligations. From this high rostrum I am addressing all United Nations Member States and the community of nations to express gratitude for providing support and assistance in implementing our international initiatives.

For us, neutrality is not just a legal status. It is an active position, a full-scale involvement in international processes through peacemaking and assisting in working out effective models of economic cooperation. It also includes providing a political platform for solving problems, both within the region and beyond, for the purpose of consolidating peace, security and creating favourable conditions for sustainable development and progress. This is the main purpose and content of our steps and initiatives on the world arena.

Turkmenistan's approach to contemporary problems is based on confidence in the ability of the international community to find the right solutions, to overcome stereotypes, to free itself from the burden of

stagnant thinking and to attain a new view of prospects for global interaction. We call this a strategy of the future, implying the achievement of a broad and stable international consensus on key development issues — political, socio-economic, energy-related and ecological matters.

For objective reasons, issues of economic cooperation are of particular importance for Turkmenistan. A strategic priority for us in this area is diversification of energy routes, provision of a new, multi-option pipeline infrastructure. We have started working actively in that direction, based on clearly defined principles of State policy in this sphere, a realistic evaluation of our own resource base and the possibilities for its long-term exploitation.

Last year, construction of new Turkmenistan-China and Turkmenistan-Iran gas pipelines was completed successfully, in cooperation with our partners. We consider that to be a real contribution to international energy cooperation and an effective stabilizing factor that will have a positive influence on the overall situation and will provide additional stability to the whole system of political and economic ties on the Asian continent.

Today we are actively working on implementing another project — a Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. We are convinced that that is beneficial for all parties involved. The project will promote an economic upturn, create a large number of additional jobs, build social infrastructure and support and consolidate political stability in the region.

Currently, issues of equal, uninterrupted and secure access to energy sources and their means of transport have taken on global importance, having an increasing impact on the overall situation in the world and on the nature and the lines of international cooperation and the level of the engagement of States and regions in development processes. That requires raising this issue to the United Nations level, working out common principles and intelligible regulations governing relations among producers, transit countries and consumers, under United Nations auspices.

In this connection, Turkmenistan intends to make a statement in the course of the current session, proposing adoption of an Assembly resolution on the creation, under United Nations auspices, of an expert group that would develop an international mechanism for a stable energy supply in the world. We understand that working on such a mechanism requires from the international community time and effort, responsibility, flexibility and readiness for sensible compromise, and that it call up political, diplomatic, intellectual, financial and organizational resources. However, we are also convinced that from the standpoint of global security and stability, the strategic benefits and advantages will immeasurably surpass all costs and expenses.

Obviously, in current conditions only the United Nations — with its unique legitimacy, enormous moral authority, available legal regulators and extensive experience in resolving issues of universal importance — is able to give impetus to this process, to provide conditions for broad dialogue and act as a guarantor if agreements are reached.

The world community has an understanding that the problem of globally secure and reliable transit for energy carriers requires multilateral discussions. In confirmation of that, in 2008 the General Assembly supported our initiative to launch such a dialogue, which is already being held within various international and regional meetings. We believe that we need to move forward and raise it to a fundamentally new institutional level. Therefore Turkmenistan suggests considering the matter of eventually creating a special body — the United Nations Energy Council. The purpose and content of its activity would be to provide a political format and organizational conditions for a systemic, professional discussion of the whole range of problems related to energy. With due respect, we call on all Member States to formulate their suggestions in light of this initiative.

Ten years ago, in its Declaration, the Millennium Summit declared all Member States responsible for the destiny of the planet. For Turkmenistan, the Millennium Development Goals have organically fit into our own development plans, matched the ideology and outlook of the reform of the national economy, the social sphere and public relations, and to a large extent they have defined the lines of our cooperation on the world arena.

Turkmenistan has set a strategic course for active participation in a broad international partnership from the position of a peaceful, politically stable, economically strong State; for multidimensional regional cooperation based on the compatibility of interests of various countries and support of its own

and other large-scale international projects involving countries and companies of the region and beyond.

Owing to the geographical characteristics of Central Asia and the Caspian Basin, the development of transport and communications seems promising here. Building an extensive modern railway, road and communications network in the region could provide a great impetus to our countries successful participating in the global economic development. That would ensure an inflow of investment and create the conditions for effective North-South and East-West cooperation in the context of the intercontinental economic realities in the Eurasian space.

We propose that the United Nations earnestly consider the prospects for the development of transport and communications infrastructure in Central Asia and the Caspian Basin. We are ready for close cooperation in that sphere. We believe it appropriate that specialized United Nations bodies, first and foremost the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, to become actively involved in that task.

Solving the serious ecological problems, first and foremost, saving the Aral Sea and rehabilitating the unique natural resources of the Caspian Sea, is a crucial factor in achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the region. More specifically, we believe it necessary to create a special group of international experts, which, in cooperation with the United Nations and its entities, could draw up a comprehensive international legal document on saving the Aral Sea. That task should be undertaken immediately, based on the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Executive Committee of the International Fund to Save the Aral Sea, signed in Ashgabat on 3 March 2010.

In short, we believe it necessary to create the opportunity for United Nations specialized bodies to be present in the Central Asia region and the Caspian Basin without delay. We expect the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to actively work there first. We propose considering opening a UNEP regional office in one of the States of the region. Turkmenistan is ready to provide the necessary infrastructure for that.

A critical issue directly linked with the ecosystem is the use of water resources. More specifically, the rational use of water in Central Asia is one of the key factors having a significant impact on the momentum for our countries' socio-economic development. Turkmenistan believes that water disputes should be settled on the basis of the universally recognized norms of international law, taking into account the interests of all countries of the region, with the world community represented by the United Nations and with the active participation of other reliable international organizations.

Our efforts are aimed at establishing a strong and effective system of regional security and stability in Central Asia and the Caspian Basin, with a commitment to peaceful negotiations to settle problems or disputes. Here, mutual understanding, confidence and openness, as well as the frank and objective discussion of all topical issues, are crucial.

That, in turn, requires that there be a mechanism for regional dialogue and continuing multilateral communication in order to develop mutually acceptable approaches to certain issues. Such a dialogue should be held regularly, with a clearly specified agenda, and participants should have the authority necessary to take decisions. We believe that that form of communication is needed today owing to the current state of regional development. We propose establishing a high-level forum on security, peace and cooperation in Central Asia and the Caspian Basin to serve as the political format for such cooperation. The forum should meet on a regular basis, with each country in the region hosting it in turn. We are ready to organize its first meeting in Ashgabat within a reasonable period of time.

This year, international conferences on resolving the situation in Afghanistan have been held in London and Kabul. In general, we are satisfied with the results of both meetings, and would like to outline our approaches in the light of the decisions made there.

First, Turkmenistan understands and supports the efforts of the Afghanistan Administration to resolve the situation through talks to establish national unity and reconciliation. That is in line with our view on the prospects for development in Afghanistan. We consider it necessary for the international community to provide international assistance to its Afghan partners. In that regard, taking into account its neutral status, our country is prepared to hold, under United Nations auspices, a high-level international meeting on confidence-building in Afghanistan and the

development of effective State institutions. We are ready to discuss organizing such a meeting with our Afghan partners, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, other specialized United Nations bodies involved in the Afghanistan issue and all interested parties.

Secondly, based on our wish to assist the people of that country in State-building and in line with the outcomes of the London and Kabul meetings, we offer our assistance in training Afghan personnel for management in various fields in Turkmenistan, under United Nations sponsorship and programmes.

Thirdly, we believe that it is crucial to assist Afghanistan in developing transport infrastructure. Our country proposes building a railway from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan that extends further into Afghan territory, with the help of international organizations, donor countries and international financial institutions. We would welcome the international community's participation in that project.

Fourthly, we believe that efforts to build a Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline must be considerably stepped up. A trans-Afghan pipeline could significantly help to develop Afghanistan's economy, resolve major social issues, including in the area of employment, attract investment and have a positive influence on the political situation in the country.

Fifthly, Turkmenistan is prepared to consider increasing the electric power supply to Afghanistan and extending its energy infrastructure in order to connect it to Afghanistan's network in the future. We invite the international community to consider that proposal at the United Nations.

Comprehensive and targeted cooperation with the United Nations Organization is a strategic choice for Turkmenistan. For us, the United Nations is not just the most representative international body. We see it as the mainstay of the entire current system of global cooperation, guaranteeing the preservation and maintenance of peace and the balance of interests in the international arena, and safeguarding the current security architecture.

Together with the international community, based on the ongoing positive experience of the cooperation, wisdom and responsibility of all States Members of the United Nations, Turkmenistan will continue to strive to achieve the lofty goals and ideals of the Organization.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki): I would like to remind speakers that the time limit for statements is five minutes. I hope that they will respect that to the extent that they are able.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia.

President Tadić: I am pleased to be able to address this High-Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals. I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his exemplary leadership on this crucial issue for the future of our planet.

The contemporary world is faced with the challenge of global, shared responsibility for the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. Since we last met here in 2005, significant if uneven progress has been made, despite the setbacks caused by the financial and economic crisis, volatile energy and food prices, climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

As an observer State to the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Union, the Republic of Serbia is well aware of the great efforts made by developing countries to meet their commitments. Our traditionally warm ties, together with our long-standing solidarity and assistance policies, will continue to serve as a strong foundation of cooperation with the developing world.

Meeting the Millennium Development Goals stands as one of the defining challenges of the twenty-first century. Levelling the economic playing field, in the context of globalization, is perhaps the most important contribution developed countries can make.

I am confident that the Republic of Serbia will meet all eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015. While they are all interconnected and mutually reinforcing, I would like to focus my remarks on four of them and on how we have effectively synergized our efforts to meet them through Serbia's poverty reduction strategy, itself an integral part of the Serbian Government's efforts to achieve our central strategic priority — membership in the European Union.

We have committed to across-the-board, evidence-based policymaking. This has resulted in a more efficient use of public funds, combined with greater transparency and a successful fight against corruption and organized crime. The Serbian Government has also taken measures to ensure that the prices of basic food items, such as milk, cooking oil, flour and so on, will never again be manipulated by speculators.

In these difficult economic times, we have placed a premium on expanding the social safety net. The enforcement of equality of opportunity, gender equality and the empowerment of women and minorities is being emphasized, and we have redoubled our efforts to ensure that pensions and savings are protected by maintaining macroeconomic stability.

Moreover, significant investments in health care, education and family care services have begun to pay off, with Serbia's poverty reduction strategy being leveraged into a progressive recovery plan for jobs and growth, attracting additional foreign direct investment and modernizing infrastructure. The absolute poverty rate was reduced by half in just five years. However, our work is not done yet. Poverty reduction amongst children is still a great challenge.

Integral to our efforts has been ensuring environmental sustainability through innovative financial mechanisms at the national and regional levels. A good example of just such an attempt is the Belgrade Initiative on enhancing subregional cooperation in the field of climate change.

In my country and throughout South-East Europe, paying for environmental infrastructure is a very important public policy priority, but it is becoming more difficult to cover the costs. In my view, the solution is closely linked to broader environmental policy reforms, specifically in the setting up of an efficient and decentralized system of environmental financing and in finding ways to upgrade environmental infrastructure and monitoring systems.

But it is not just about finding ways to pay for environmental sustainability. On a broader, conceptual level, it is about working towards a knowledge-based economy. That is why we are working to implement inventive educational policies and scientific breakthroughs and to raise awareness, so that further environmental degradation can be prevented and long-term sustainable development achieved.

The only efficient way for mankind to address the numerous challenges of modern civilization is through the investment of each and every country in science, innovation and education, in synergy with politics and economy. We are fully committed to continuing to prioritize our legislative agenda to do so, and we are willing, ready and able to assist other States in their efforts. Solidarity with the developing world is the only way to save the natural treasures of our planet and ensure health and prosperity for all of humankind.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Lieutenant-General Mompati Merafhe, Vice-President of the Republic of Botswana.

Mr. Merafhe (Botswana): Allow me to congratulate Mr. Deiss on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. Let me also seize this opportunity to thank his predecessor, Mr. Ali Treki, for his leadership of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I would also like to commend the Secretary-General, under whose stewardship we have been able to convene for this crucial summit.

Five years ago, we convened here in New York to review the progress made on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) since their adoption in the year 2000. That review showed that the enthusiasm and commitment displayed by world leaders at the 2000 Millennium Summit did not translate into the results we desired. It is evident that many developing countries are lagging behind on most of the targets. In this regard, we should renew our pledge and do everything possible to take our people out of the dehumanizing conditions of abject poverty and deprivation, in line with the Millennium Development Goals.

This notwithstanding, I have no doubt in my mind that all Members remain committed to the cause of the Millennium Declaration. In the case of Botswana, we believe in the spirit and thrust of the Declaration, that, as a Government, we should endeavour to eradicate poverty. My President has laid before the nation a road map towards prosperity for all that is underpinned by a quest for human development and dignity. We believe that through the road map, Botswana can achieve more in terms of improving the livelihood of its citizens.

Our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals has been amplified in our current National

Development Plan, which runs from 2010 to 2016. Botswana has made some progress towards eradicating poverty, as evidenced by the decline in the percentage of people living below the poverty bottom line. The percentage of people living below that line declined from 47 per cent in 1993 to an estimated 23 per cent in 2009. As a Government we firmly believe there is no tolerable level of poverty.

To this end, different categories of vulnerable groups such as those on pensions, destitute persons, orphans and other vulnerable children, as well as home-based care patients, have access to food, education, subsistence allowance and other basic necessities. However, realizing that the fight against poverty should be sustained, Botswana has adopted a flexi-programme on poverty eradication that focuses on promoting broad-based growth for sectors that create opportunities for sustainable livelihoods. The programme is geared to enhancing human capabilities of the poor through investing in and strengthening institutions that promote poor people's participation in the growth process.

Botswana continues to commit significant resources to literacy and skills development of its citizens. Consequently, we have achieved universal primary education, with more than 95 per cent of the 7- to 13-year-olds enrolled in primary education by 2007.

My Government has also made notable progress in the provision of health care for the population. For instance, the proportion of mothers who are attended by qualified health professionals during delivery has remained at approximately 90 per cent since 1998. In addition, Botswana continues to make significant inroads in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Similarly, 62.7 per cent of people living with HIV and eligible for antiretroviral therapy were on treatment in 2005, while today more than 90 per cent are on antiretroviral drugs. In 2001, an estimated 40 per cent of infants born to HIV-positive mothers were infected with the virus. That proportion has declined to just 3 per cent. Notwithstanding the progress I have just alluded to, we continue to face challenges with respect to maternal and infant mortality.

Water is a scarce commodity in Botswana. However, my Government has been able to provide potable water to more than 95 per cent of the population since the year 2000. In addition, more than 80 per cent of our people have access to improved sanitation facilities.

One of the greatest challenges to humanity is climate change. The impact of climate change is already being felt around the globe, as shown by the never-ending natural calamities bedeviling many parts of the world. It goes without saying, therefore, that climate change, if not adequately and expeditiously addressed, will continue to impede development efforts, increase risks to public health, frustrate poverty-eradication interventions and reverse gains made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

As part of its response, Botswana has established a national climate change committee whose mandate is to oversee national policies on climate change and the implementation of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change activities.

At the 2000 World Summit we pledged to strengthen the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to effectively address the full range of challenges of our times. Let us make that possible by providing the Organization with the necessary support to respond to development challenges in a timely and proactive manner. We commend the Secretary-General for establishing the Millennium Development Goals Advocacy Group of eminent personalities, who will support him in building political will and mobilizing global action to make the MDG summit a turning point in the collective effort to achieve the goals by 2015.

I believe that there should be more emphasis on supporting groups of countries with special needs such as middle-income countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. On their own, those countries, or groups of countries, do not possess enough capacity and resources to mitigate disasters and development challenges.

My delegation looks forward to an action-oriented outcome at the end of this High-level Plenary Meeting. I believe such an outcome will be adequately resourced.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Treki) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

President Ramos-Horta: In the year 2000, the world gathered here for six days in September. We met to discuss the role of the United Nations system on the cusp of a new century whose dawn we eyed with hope and anticipation and made a commitment embodied in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

And here today we meet again. My hope for today and coming days is that same genuine will fostered in September 2000 can be reinvigorated, but this time infused with valuable lessons learnt.

While many countries have been guided by the MDGs to improve social and economic conditions, there remains a unique group of countries, fragile nations and post-conflict nations that have been less fortunate. Those fragile and post-conflict countries face unique challenges whose significance was not realized during the formulation of the MDGs. At the time, concepts such as peacebuilding, State-building and fragility were not part of the normative international discourse, and therefore an understanding of their impact on contextualizing MDG achievement and timeframes for that achievement was, regrettably, absent.

I am here to say that despite our combined efforts, we must be realistic and acknowledge now, here and today, that fragile and post-conflict States are the farthest from meeting the MDGs and most likely will not meet them under the time frame the architects intended. The sooner we all accept this reality, begin to make amends and take urgent action, the better.

I deliver this message not just as the Head of State of my country, Timor-Leste, but as a representative of a group of fragile and post-conflict States, known as the g7+. We advocate a new paradigm as a means to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by placing peacebuilding and State-building at the forefront of international engagement.

In my country and in the very corridors of this building, we fought long and hard for our right to self-determination, with independence regained less than a decade ago. In Timor-Leste, now more than at any other time in our brief history of nationhood, we enjoy a genuine will that has allowed us to adopt and put into action a reformist agenda tailored to the diverse historical, linguistic, geographic, political and cultural landscapes that make up the united Timor-Leste.

To achieve this success, imported ideas were substituted with home-grown ideas; international expertise, while welcomed, was contextualized with local innovation; and domestic knowledge was recognized, valued and prioritized. The nation implemented key peacebuilding and State-building functions, consolidating and reforming the security sector to foster peace and establishing such institutions as the Civil Service Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Petroleum Authority for the best management of our natural resources, and forged aggressive reforms in public financial management and decentralization for better delivery.

We adopted, for the first time, socially compassionate policies — pensions for the elderly, disabled and veterans — and returned some 150,000 internally displaced persons to their homes in less than two years, against all odds. Above all, dialogue replaced discord. With this, I am glad to report that, in Timor-Leste, much progress has been made.

While, as previously reported, between 1999 and 2006-2007 some $8 billion were allocated by the international community for Timor-Leste, between 2000 and 2006 poverty apparently increased. The $8 billion allegedly allocated to my country begs the question: why? Since 2007, as our Government took ownership of our resources and responsibilities, it has been able to reverse this trend, making public spending a cornerstone of the efforts to ease the suffering of our most vulnerable, to spur economic growth and, above all, to consolidate a newfound level of stability.

Mr. Merafhe (Botswana), Vice-President of the General Assembly, took the Chair.

I promulgated State budgets that were tripled in size and with a targeted spending level of $1.4 billion since 2007. I am pleased to report a 9-per cent reduction in poverty, with the key MDG poverty indicators significantly improving, and this only in the past two years.

Averaging three years of consistent double-digit economic growth since 2007, Timor-Leste has been cited as one of the top 10 fastest growing economies in the world for 2008 and 2009. Our non-oil per capita income has increased significantly; 30 per cent of our general State budget will be devoted to public health and basic education over the next 10 years.

The MDG target for infant mortality and our under-five mortality rate has reached its target for 2015, as have the detection and cure of tuberculosis, with new targets being set. School enrolment has increased from 65 per cent in 2007 to 83 per cent in 2009-2010. In fact, across the board for all MDG indicators, Timor-Leste shows improvements, some major and some minor.

In addressing the need to fast-track achievement towards the MDGs, we have created an innovative programme, to be launched next year. Our MDG programme for *sucos* — that is, villages — provides direct funding to all 442 villages in Timor-Leste, giving ownership and responsibility for community works and giving Timorese the opportunity not just to witness development but to be a part of development.

For a country that regained independence in 2002, are these endeavours enough to overcome the challenges of 400 years of occupation and 24 years of war and to reverse the effects of decades and centuries of neglect, and can we now say that the MDGs will be met in Timor-Leste by 2015? Our answer is that we will have met some, and we could meet most if there were a change in the way aid was delivered by the donor community.

We must trust in the practices and principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the subsequent Accra Agenda for Action, with ownership and harmonization at the forefront, guided first by the principles of peacebuilding and State-building, because without peace to secure the lives and livelihoods of our citizens and without State capacity to protect and deliver vital services, the MDGs will remain a distant dream for many countries.

When we do this, as in the case of Timor-Leste, we demonstrate that we can, together, make significant progress. We must now make the collective decision to move from fragility to agility, and do so with the same vigour and effort with which the MDGs were originally asserted. May God the almighty and the merciful bless us all.

The Acting Chair: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Minh Triet, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

President Nguyen Minh Triet (*spoke in Vietnamese; English text provided by delegation*): The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent the strongest commitment of all Member States to equitable development, which lays a solid foundation for international peace, security and enhanced multilateral cooperation.

We are pleased to see the positive results recorded thus far, which have helped improve the lives of hundreds of millions of people, including those in the poorest countries. Women and children have received better care and been able to benefit more from it. The most valuable lesson to be drawn from this is that the implementation of the MDGs must be placed at the heart of international cooperation and of the development strategies of developing countries. Only by so doing can the international community mobilize the required resources via new policies and measures at the national and international levels.

We are glad to inform the Assembly that Viet Nam has achieved a number of MDGs ahead of schedule and is on track to attain the remaining goals by 2015. Viet Nam's encouraging achievements — particularly in poverty reduction, universal primary education, the promotion of gender equality, the reduction of child mortality, the improvement of maternal health and the control of malaria and other pandemics — have won the recognition of the United Nations, international organizations and Member States.

Viet Nam fulfils its commitments by localizing and mainstreaming the MDGs into strategies, plans and development programmes at all levels and by promoting the participation of its people. The progress made is also due to Viet Nam's comprehensive reforms and the effective support of the international community.

Despite those encouraging accomplishments, Viet Nam still faces a range of difficulties. The country's infrastructure is still underdeveloped and the living standards of our people remain low, particularly among communities residing in remote and mountainous regions and areas devastated by the war, as well as among victims of agent orange/dioxin.

Viet Nam shares the common concern over the fact that more than 1 billion people are still living in poverty, the uneven progress made between Goals and among countries, as well as the possibility that most regions will not achieve many Goals without further strong measures. This unfortunate situation is deeply rooted in unfair international economic relations in

which developing countries are forced into disadvantageous positions, and in defects in national development policies. In addition, over the past 10 years, the implementation of the MDGs has been negatively affected by increased unilateralism and the use of force, war and tension in parts of the world and, most recently, by the global economic and financial crises, coupled with the volatility in energy prices, food insecurity and the impacts of climate change.

Viet Nam supports the overall solutions and the specific measures for each Goal defined in the draft action agenda to be adopted at this Meeting (A/65/L.1). In addition, the Vietnamese delegation wishes to underline the following.

First, peace and stability are prerequisites for development. Therefore, it is our common responsibility to support the peaceful settlement of international disputes, actively seek fair solutions to conflicts, facilitate peaceful and friendly relations among nations, and resolutely oppose war and the use of force.

Secondly, we must continue to expand cooperation and create favourable international conditions to assist developing countries in policymaking and in strengthening their management capacities. In that connection, developed countries should deliver on their pledges and commitments, including with regard to maintaining macroeconomic stability, contributing to the successful conclusion of the Doha Round, eliminating unfair trade measures and increasing development assistance.

Viet Nam strongly calls for an end to the economic embargo against Cuba.

Within its capacity, in recent years Viet Nam has expanded South-South cooperation with countries in South-East Asia and other regions.

Thirdly, to implement the measures set out at this Meeting, we should quickly develop international and national implementation programmes to sustain progress, accomplish all MDGs in all regions, and even strive for higher goals.

The past 10 years have shown us the significance and feasibility of the MDGs and brought us rich experiences. We are now presented with new opportunities, including the full recognition of the importance of multilateral cooperation with the United Nations at the centre. On that basis and with determination, creativity and cooperation, I am confident that we will make new progress in our joint efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The Acting Chair: The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia.

President Pohamba: I join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for convening this High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is a timely event, coming as it does 10 years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and five years before the cut-off date of 2015, by which the MDGs should be achieved.

In 2005, a high-level plenary meeting was held here at the Headquarters of the United Nations to review the progress that Member States were making towards achieving the Goals. Today, 10 years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration and five years before the target date, it is time to take stock in order to see how much we have achieved and how much remains to be done.

On its part, Namibia recognized from the outset that achieving the MDGs would be a daunting task. Hence, we decided to integrate the achievement of the Goals into our national development programmes and policies, such as our five-year national development plans and Vision 2030. To that end, national targets and indicators were also developed to monitor progress towards the achievement of the goals.

For example, we have expanded the delivery of public services and social amenities. Today, the majority of our people have access to clear water. Three quarters of our urban population has access to electricity. Many rural communities have been provided with electricity through the rural electrification programme. However, there has been less progress with regard to access to sanitation, particularly in rural areas.

Our Government regards the provision of education and training to our people as one of its most important national priorities. For that reason, over the years we have constantly allocated the largest percentage of the national budget to the education sector. Today, our country is on course to achieving the goal of providing universal primary education. I am

happy to say that Namibia has achieved and in fact exceeded gender parity with respect to enrolment ratios for girls to boys in our schools.

Overall, progress in reducing infant mortality has been rather slow, while in the area of maternal health progress has been made with regard to the number of births attended by trained personnel. Maternal mortality currently stands at 4.9 deaths per 100 live births. Our goal is to reduce that figure and move closer to achieving Goals 4 and 5.

Complications from HIV/AIDS have become the main cause of death in our country. However, there has been a significant decline in the number of new infections as a result of the ongoing country-wide public awareness campaigns. Likewise, although malaria is the third main cause of death in our country, it has been contained through the distribution of free insecticide-treated mosquito nets and by the spraying of household materials. As a result of ongoing treatment and awareness campaigns, progress has been recorded with regard to successfully treating cases of tuberculosis, especially during the period since 1996.

Namibia faces a decline in international development assistance due to our country's classification as a middle-income country. In the spirit of the Windhoek Ministerial Declaration on Development Cooperation with Middle-Income Countries, which was adopted in August 2008, I appeal to the Bretton Woods and other international financial institutions to create special mechanisms to enable middle-income countries such as Namibia to access financial resources for development on concessional terms.

Indeed, there is a need to strengthen the global partnership for development to promote and facilitate effective international cooperation and achieve the MDGs. I would like to further urge our development cooperation partners to honour the obligations made at various international forums to provide consistent financial and technical support to developing countries. By working together, we can achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The Acting Chair: The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II, Head of State of the Principality of Monaco.

Prince Albert (*spoke in French*): Ten years ago from this very rostrum (see A/55/PV.5), I resolutely made the commitment before the General Assembly that my country would effectively support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which we set for ourselves when we adopted the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2). In 2000, we decisively expressed our active desire for a new era and together reaffirmed our determination to implement the objectives of human dignity in the new millennium. We also determined to spare no effort to combat poverty, thereby making the world fairer and more united in solidarity.

So how can we today justify a woman dying during childbirth as a result of the lack adequate care? How can we justify a child dying from hunger or preventable disease when so much technical and scientific progress is at our disposal? That moral quandary and the conviction that world peace and security cannot be achieved without sustainable development for all are at the heart of the political compact uniting the whole international community, which we have come here today to consider. Five years from a deadline that will constitute a decisive test for the Organization, our collective responsibility and the survival of the planet are what is at stake at this crucial juncture.

There have been some encouraging results, in particular in the areas of primary education and combating HIV/AIDS, which lead us to believe that the Goals continue to be realistic. They should prompt us to redouble our efforts, lest we backslide on the progress made. We should courageously reaffirm the basic values that guide international relations in our interdependent world: liberty, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

In that connection, I reaffirm my country's commitment to carry out an international development cooperation policy based on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Monaco's official development assistance will therefore reach the target of 0.7 per cent gross national income by 2015, thereby enabling the Principality of Monaco to join the group of countries that have shown the greatest solidarity. Our assistance, which has increased five-fold since 2000, is growing by 25 per cent annually. Provided entirely on the basis of grants, Monaco's assistance is essentially geared towards our partners among the least developed countries, and targets development projects in the areas of health, education, the environment and microfinancing.

Poverty is unacceptable. It is not intolerable that nearly 1 billion people are still affected by hunger, that one in four children in the developing world is underweight and that almost 1 billion persons lack daily access to water. Five years from the 2015 deadline, we still have a collective responsibility. We must take the opportunity afforded us in this crucial period to find a way to honour our commitments. In that regard, I would like to propose making the Principality of Monaco in coming years a special centre for promoting the partnership for development between the various public and private stakeholders.

In addition, beyond our increasing development efforts, my country will continue to be active on emergency assistance, especially with regard to vulnerable groups affected by natural disasters linked to climate change.

The new millennium has given rise to many hopes, which have been damped somewhat by the explosion of threats pressing on humankind and the environment. During this year devoted to biodiversity and on the eve of the high-level meeting on that issue, we must bear in mind the importance of preserving the environment in which we live. I personally commit myself to developing innovative, ethical solutions in the areas of biodiversity, climate change and the sustainable management of water resources.

More than ever before, we must urgently mobilize to complete the Rio+20 preparations. Achieving sustainable development and the MDGs are interlinked; we must pursue them synergistically. I am certain that the MDGs will not be achieved unless we bear in mind the concept of sustainability. In that regard, everyone must be involved in this effort and in the decisions taken. Governance should be global, multilateral and shared, as espoused by the informal Global Governance Group with which Monaco has fully associated itself.

As the Indian poet Vikram Seth has written, you should never make a child a promise that you cannot or do not intend to keep. I am sure that everyone speaking from this rostrum today believes in the urgency of achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the next five years. But now is not the time for believing; now is the time to act.

The Acting Chair: The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia.

President Saakashvili: It is a pleasure and a privilege to address the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) review summit this year. As a result of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), over the past decade we have seen significant changes in the way we approach urgent development needs. Two pillars of this new approach are the introduction of innovative financing mechanisms and reliance on the idea of local ownership.

First of all, with regard to financing, I think that the International Drug Purchase Facility is an excellent example of innovation. It could have become just another bureaucracy. Instead it has been a spectacular success that now serves as one of our most efficient tools in addressing the millennium challenges. Of course we need more money. More money matters. But aid money will not deliver concrete results unless we pay more attention to the essential idea of local ownership.

If we understand local ownership just as a way of giving money to local bureaucrats and then allowing them the freedom to spend it, as we have seen in Georgia and many other countries throughout the world, it would mean giving money to local officials for housing with which they would build wonderful villas in their native countries or abroad. We have seen them given money for education, with which they would send their children to the best universities in the West or elsewhere, without giving anything to their own people. They have been given money for health care, while hospitals have remained in miserable shape and people have had no access. However, they would send their wives and daughters to give birth in the best foreign hospitals and enjoy all the other luxuries while enriching themselves. That is what local ownership means in some countries.

However, the way local ownership should really be understood, and as it is understood in the better cases, is that it inspires and reinforces responsible governance. The Millennium Goals are not only an expression of a new global ethics or an absolute economic and financial philosophy. The Goals are at once global and profoundly local in their political importance and impact. They demand local stakeholders to take political responsibility for success. Countries simply cannot be stable without reducing poverty and improving their educational and health care systems.

Nor can the broader world be stable, and we all know it. It is not only about terrorism, but also about trafficking, illegal immigration and the other scourges that no wall can protect us from. We cannot build walls; they do not protect. A very smart governor in the United States once said that if he were to build a 50-foot wall, the traffickers would build a 51-foot ladder. We must be smarter, faster, more innovative and, above all, more united to achieve our goals.

Yet we face a dilemma when it comes to local ownership that is a modern-day version of the chicken-and-egg problem. The fight against poverty requires responsible and stable local actors. Yet we need to reduce poverty in order to generate local political stability. How can we square the circle? It is not impossible, but it demands clear vision and dedication. With the Assembly's indulgence, I would like to share some of our experiences in Georgia, in the hope that these might help to shed light on how to achieve local ownership.

Since 2003, Georgia has made great strides in fighting poverty, in providing education, employment and shelter, in improving maternal and child care, in fighting HIV/AIDS and introducing sustainable environmental practices, which will hopefully help to inform the work of others, just as we hope to learn from others so we can accelerate our efforts to address the MDGs. Our experience has shown that the first thing we need to develop is a feeling of and capacity for local ownership. The essential thing in that regard is combating corruption.

Fighting corruption might not be on the official MDGs list, but all of us know that it is a prerequisite for any meaningful progress. It is all about corruption when it comes to starting programmes. When the Millennium Declaration was signed, Georgia was a failed State crippled by decaying infrastructure and systemic corruption. Billions of dollars in aid had amounted to essentially next to nothing. Electricity was off more than it was on. Pension payments rarely made their way to the elderly. Educational opportunities were allotted based on bribes rather than merit. The vast majority of aid enriched those in power, rather than benefiting those desperately in need.

The 2003 Rose Revolution dramatically changed the playing field. Fighting corruption was the first goal of my Government, and we implemented radical legal, legislative and practical measures needed to confront corruption head-on. It is no accident that in the following years Georgia started to make considerable progress towards addressing the MDGs. We have fought poverty and hunger, both directly and by providing employment. That has included focusing on rapid economic development and job creation, creating a favourable investment climate to attract foreign direct investment, reforming the pension system and expanding the social network for pensioners and other socially vulnerable groups.

In 2003, our poverty rate was more than 42 per cent. Now it is less than 18 per cent. Extreme poverty — people living on less than $1.50 per day — stood at 18 per cent. Now it is less than 6 per cent. The progress we have made encourages us to continue our work. Of course, when we talk about 6 per cent, it is 6 per cent too much. When we talk about 18 per cent, it is 18 per cent too much.

Improving education — another Millennium Development Goal — is an essential element of our economic vision, including leading people out of poverty. We have expanded universal primary education to a 12-year programme. We also have introduced new professional training schools to enable people to participate in the economy. We have introduced an ambitious English language education programme and invited 10,000 teachers who are native English speakers to our schools in order to ensure that our next generation will have a world of opportunity open to them. We are initiating the construction and operation of a new world-class technological university in Batumi, the most wonderful city of the Black Sea. We are willing to channel tremendous sums of money to make that university come into being and work to create the highest world standards for our country and for our region.

Again, however, building schools and putting money into programmes is not enough. We must empower stakeholders in the education system, making them feel responsible — in other words, endowing them with a sense of local ownership. That is why I am proud that Georgia was the first post-Soviet country to introduce nationwide self-governance of schools.

Since 2003, Georgia has also been working to massively overhaul our health care system to enhance transparency in the health insurance and pharmaceutical markets. We also have a comprehensive HIV/AIDS programme, including programmes that

target high-risk groups, treatment programmes for those in need and education campaigns to slow the spread of this disease and lessen the social stigma associated with it.

We have also tried to address some of the secondary illnesses often related to HIV, including tuberculosis and hepatitis-B. The establishment of tuberculosis rooms in primary health care facilities resulted in daily direct observation of drug intake, which rose from 28 per cent to almost 98 per cent. On this and other health care issues, Sandra Elisabeth Roelofs is taking the lead and following the programmes. She also happens to be my wife. She works not only as the director of a foundation but also as a medical nurse in hospitals who attends deliveries and cares for other patients. That is why I happen to know this subject so well.

Our work is also focused on maternal and child health and includes nationwide initiatives to improve family planning and more comprehensive care for expecting mothers and newborns. This is an area in which the private sector has been integrally involved. We believe that it will help us to provide sustainable long-term solutions for improvement across Georgia.

Georgia was the first country to serve as a pilot for the World Health Organization course in modern evidence-based obstetric and neonatal care, which resulted in reducing caesarian sections to 10 per cent of all deliveries and episiotomy rates from 69 per cent to 9 per cent, as well as an increase in partner-attended deliveries from 0 per cent to 91 per cent.

We are fortunate that our revolution was driven as much by women reformers as men. As a result, this new and vibrant Georgia has created many opportunities for women and inspired them to participate in the economy and political life. We continue to look for ways to improve gender equality in Georgian society and encourage women to seek elective office. We now have more women in Government, Parliament and at every level of public life.

Finally, I would like to say a quick word on environmental sustainability. If there is one lesson that a former Soviet republic should have learned from Soviet planning, it is that economic growth should never come at the expense of the environment. In addressing Georgia's economic development, we have sought to ensure that we do so in accordance with safe environmental practices. In fact, the transformation of our energy sector was achieved primarily through investment in hydro-power generation, which is a clean, safe and renewable source of energy.

We do, of course, have one major environmental concern at the moment, but it relates to the situation in Russian-occupied Abkhazia, where, unfortunately, the Government of Georgia currently has no ability to intervene to preserve the environment. We are greatly concerned about the environmental impact of the resource-stripping occurring in Abkhazia in support of the construction of the venues for the 2014 Olympic Games to be held in the bordering Russian resort of Sochi.

I would ask our partners to help us carefully monitor this situation because, if the MDGs are to be achieved, we need to avoid black holes of governance. Today, 20 per cent of Georgia consists of such black holes. This is why I ask the whole Assembly to support the implementation of Georgia's proposed engagement strategy with all the occupied territories, which offers a variety of people-to-people programmes. Even if we have around 500,000 refugees and internally displaced persons from these territories and most of those territories are virtually devoid of people, we do not want any of our remaining citizens there to be left behind by development plans. The implementation of this strategy will not be possible without the serious involvement of the international community.

Georgia's success in overcoming the plague of underdevelopment would not have been the same without its MDGs programme. The MDGs make it easier to form partnerships that can address local needs more efficiently and effectively. This new mechanism of international integration is a great tool for developing countries with responsible and responsive Governments. In Georgia, where we saw corruption destroying our nation, we were fortunate to still have food in our bellies and the ability to organize ourselves to fight against those who believed that self-enrichment was a right of leadership.

But I am realistic that, in many places, people can worry only about their own survival and that of their children, leaving them little time to dream of what a better future might look like. So it is vital today to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. Fighting corruption and creating a sense of local ownership are essential for the upcoming last five

years of the Millennium Development Goals programme and beyond.

The Acting Chair: The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Abdallah Sambi, President of the Union of the Comoros.

President Sambi (*spoke in French*): The efforts made by countries individually and collectively to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have produced progress in many areas. Nevertheless, most of the scourges we identified in 2000 have not yet been eliminated. Some have even worsened, expanding the scale of the challenges we have to overcome by 2015.

Like other countries, the Union of the Comoros has made remarkable progress on some of the Millennium Development Goals despite the difficult economic and financial situation in which it currently finds itself, especially as regards the lack of resources and, in particular, of an investment budget. That has led to many other delays in meeting other MDGs.

We have great hopes with regard to primary education and child health. Between 1991 and 2008, primary school enrolment rates increased from 63 per cent to 76 per cent and the percentage of children completing primary education increased from 41 per cent to 57 per cent. Similarly, between 1991 and 2007, under-five child mortality dropped from 130 to 66 per 1,000 live births, while mortality for children under one year of age fell from 86 to 49 per 1,000 live births. We very much hope to reach the relevant targets in that regard with minimal support from our partners.

On the other hand, it will be very difficult for us to achieve the targets on employment and the environment. My country has experienced too many delays in those areas, and our implementation of policies and strategies has been hampered by numerous financing and institutional capacity problems. Nevertheless, we will continue to redouble our efforts to overcome those challenges.

Our planet faces an exceedingly serious situation from climate change, as was noted in Rio de Janeiro 17 years ago. We should therefore take this opportunity to mobilize in our common desire to act to create a cleaner and more viable world and to make the necessary commitments to put us in a position to save the world and, in particular, small island States threatened with submersion by rising seas.

By 2025, sea level rise could lead to the displacement of a large part of my country's population and to the destruction of parts of our economic infrastructure. Forecasts made in 2003 indicate that there will be a decrease in the availability of water owing to the drying up of 63 out of 75 rivers surveyed throughout our islands in 1960. In addition, over the past 30 years we have experienced annual temperature increases of one Celsius degree. That increase has had a negative impact on socio-economic development by serving to expand the spread of malaria and other contagious diseases. There could also be a dramatic impact on security and on tourism, which is one of the sectors on which our country's economic growth is based.

I would like to emphasize that the Union of the Comoros has enormous potential in terms of hydroelectric, solar, wind and geothermal resources. Financial and technical assistance to exploit that energy will make it possible for us to participate in the global mitigation effort and to improve the economic and social well-being of the people of the Comoros.

I believe that the limited progress made in achieving the MDGs is due in large part to inadequate financing for development. The poorest and most vulnerable countries often have very limited access to official development assistance. The assessment of the costs and needs necessary to achieve the MDGs carried out in developing countries at the recommendation of the 2005 World Summit led those countries to adopt very ambitious development plans that were not financially sustainable without appropriate international assistance. The Union of the Comoros has limited domestic resources, and our programmes speed up the achievement of the MDGs appear unrealistic against that backdrop. We are therefore prioritizing our ambitions in the context of a programme of action for our development strategy that is based on achieving the MDGs.

In conclusion, I would like to express our great hope that this summit will be a historic success so that multilateralism and international solidarity live on.

The Acting Chair: The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Gjorge Ivanov, President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

President Ivanov (*spoke in Macedonian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): At the outset, let me take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the Secretary-General and to all those involved in the preparation and organization of this meeting for their leadership and commitment to keep us focused on the Millennium Development Goals. I am honoured to have this opportunity to address the General Assembly at this moment when we all remain united in our desire to build a future with more hope and a new era of prosperity where everyone will be given a chance to live in dignity.

We live in a time when the world is slowly coming out of the global economic crisis. We must not forget that an economic and financial crisis is always a humanitarian crisis as well, because it brings poverty to many people. The slow progress in the eradication of extreme poverty is yet another problem, as are numerous other challenges such as conflicts, food insecurity and increasing inequality among the world's countries and regions.

We are also experiencing a rapid increase in the number and intensity of natural and human-caused disasters. In conditions where climate change is accelerating, such disasters could result in more casualties and greater material damage. Neither developing nor developed countries are spared the effects of such disasters. We must therefore take immediate action. Strong political will is necessary. We all know what our countries and international organizations have already achieved and we are all aware of the future challenges and tasks. However, not all countries and regions of the world face the same challenges.

The region of South-East Europe, to which my country belongs, has made tangible progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. I recall that, as compared to just 10 years ago, the entire region has achieved dramatic success. Ten years ago, when the Millennium Development Goals were adopted, our region was recovering from a traumatic period. Guided by the idea of a common future in the European Union (EU) and NATO, and with the dark period of conflict still fresh in our minds, all the countries of the region have now begun to move their societies towards prosperous overall regional cooperation. Everyone in the region has been focused on the common goal. This was a precondition to focusing on the Millennium Development Goals as well, and it is thus that we achieved certain results.

What are the achievements attained by the Republic of Macedonia in meeting the Goals? In areas such as reducing health risks and expanding education, the Republic of Macedonia has made significant progress. There has also been progress in improving the environment. However, we can conclude that in areas such as poverty and the development partnership, little progress has been made.

There is a reason that there has been insufficient progress in those sectors. For many in this Hall, it may be strange to hear that, in part, the reasons for inadequate development should be sought in actions taken by an EU and NATO member State. Unfortunately, I must tell the Assembly that the economic development of the Republic of Macedonia is being hampered by our immediate neighbour.

A problem has been imposed on us concerning the name of my country. That is not only a political problem; it also has serious implications for our economic development and for attracting foreign investment, which can directly reduce poverty and unemployment. Fifteen years after the first trade embargo by the Hellenic Republic, Macedonia today faces a new blockade that is dissimilar to the embargo of the 1990s, but that has the same consequences.

It is a fact that Greece is one of the biggest investors in the Republic of Macedonia. But it is also a fact that the blockades in connection with integration processes indirectly impede our ability to attract other investors and investments. But we are not discouraged. We believe that we will soon find a solution with our neighbour to ensure our European and Euro-Atlantic future, and thus the prosperity of our citizens. We are indeed ready for that.

The Republic of Macedonia remains committed to reducing poverty and social exclusion. We therefore started with the preparation of a national strategy for social inclusion. I believe this strategic framework will help us improve social cohesion.

We give special attention to the Roma community in the Republic of Macedonia. We have designated the period 2005 to 2015 Roma Inclusion Decade, with the intention of helping this vulnerable, socially excluded community on the margins of society to become integrated in every social sphere. This is a huge task,

which we are implementing in close cooperation with United Nations agencies.

Today Macedonia can probably boast that it provides the best treatment for this vulnerable population, not merely in the region but well beyond. In the Republic of Macedonia the Roma population has its own local self-government, schools, media and everything that makes for the normal life of a community. From the independence of the Republic of Macedonia to the present, the Roma have had their own representatives in the parliament, the Government and all areas of State administration. We are ready to share our positive experiences and lessons learned with all.

The key to individual success and social progress lies in comprehensive education, and therefore both primary and secondary school in the Republic of Macedonia are mandatory. We are increasing the opportunities for and investment in further education for young people every day, and the Republic has implemented a project titled "A Computer for Every Student".

We are aware of the synergy of the various MDGs. Accelerating progress in one area entails doing the same for other areas. Such synergy has been brought to bear in the Republic of Macedonia in the area of maternal and child health, resulting in lower child mortality. In addition, we are committed to combating HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other serious diseases.

However, there are issues that require a global response. The consequences of climate change are already a reality. We therefore need to act jointly to adapt to climate change and for disaster risk reduction.

In the spirit of cooperation and solidarity, we are optimistic that the Millennium Development Goals will be attained. We will continue to work constructively and to be fully committed.

The Acting Chair: The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway.

Mr. Stoltenberg (Norway): Ten years ago I signed the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) here in New York together with other world leaders. We promised to improve the livelihoods of millions of people all over the globe. For the first time world leaders made concrete commitments to reduce poverty and provide access to education, health and other basic services. We have five years to make good on those promises.

And we have made progress. Hundreds of millions have been lifted out of desperate poverty. More children than ever before are in school. Millions of lives have been saved through vaccination and improved health services, clean water and better sanitation. However, we are still lagging in the achievement of our goals. Our task has been made even more challenging by the global financial crisis, the dramatic effects of climate change and the international food crisis. And many countries have defaulted on their promises.

More than one per cent of Norway's gross national income is allocated to development assistance, and we are committed to retaining that level. I encourage other countries to follow our example. Many have the capacity to do so, even in difficult economic times. I call on developing countries to mobilize more of their domestic resources, by broadening their tax base, by fighting corruption, by increasing transparency and improving accountability. Illicit financial flows from developing countries are estimated to be more than six times their total annual development assistance. This drain on vital resources for development must be stopped.

Norway is a staunch supporter of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We have taken on special responsibility for the goals of reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. These are the goals that are lagging furthest behind. But they are within reach if the world makes an extra effort. It is in our power to save those millions of women and children by 2015 — to save them from dying from easily preventable causes, simply by providing basic health services, clean water and vaccines, services that every child in every developed country receives as a matter of routine. That is why Norway has tripled its aid for global health since we met here 10 years ago.

We have worked with a network of global leaders to develop effective policies for maternal and child health, policies that reward results. Donors and taxpayers need to see results from their investments. Partner countries must do their part. To access new and additional resources, they must develop their own

health systems and deliver basic services to their own citizens.

The health of our populations decides the economic health of our nations. Health is a vital driver of development. I therefore commend the Secretary-General for his leadership in bringing our collective efforts to a new level. His Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health deserves our wholehearted support. I call on all countries and leaders gathered here this week to support the Strategy with concrete political and financial commitments.

The Millennium Development Goals cannot be seen in isolation from climate change, armed conflict and women's empowerment. All countries will be affected by climate change. But the most vulnerable — the poorest countries and peoples, those who have contributed least to the causes of climate change — will suffer most.

It is in regions affected by armed conflict and violence that we have made the least progress. And we know that the single most important catalyst for change is women's empowerment. We must honour our solemn promises made 10 years ago here in New York, building on the visions of the United Nations Charter, in which so much hope is enshrined.

The Acting Chair: The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Finance of the Independent State of Samoa.

Mr. Malielegaoi (Samoa): The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) is our collective reaffirmation that all people deserve to live in dignity, free from the dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty in its many dimensions. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent a vision of concrete and measurable achievement — not mere aspirations of what might be, but tangible outcomes of what should be. Being time-bound, with quantified targets, the MDGs respond more to our hopes than our fears. Such a vision is rooted in the concept of a peaceful, prosperous and just world for everyone to live in and enjoy.

The Millennium Development Goals have been at the top of the world's development agenda for a decade now. Today, we take stock of our progress to help us make decisions to meet the Goals by the 2015 target date. The level of achievement will vary across regions and among individual countries, but it would be a mistake at this review to be defensive or to assign blame for failures if some of the MDG targets are not yet on track to be met by 2015. After all, this should be an honest self-assessment to identify the gaps and obstacles in achieving the goals and the remedial actions required to hasten meeting them in the time remaining.

Our choices are limited. Postponing the deadline to attain the MDG targets must not be an option; if we do, we risk assigning more of our people to remain and slip into destitution. The next five years will be vital. They will determine whether the Goals will become tangible realties for everyone to enjoy, or mere aspirations of what might have been but out of reach for the majority of people.

Samoa is committed to achieving the MDGs by 2015. The Goals, by their very nature, are a restatement of our own people's development needs and hopes. As a Government, we have to respond accordingly. Our MDGs current scorecard is neither perfect nor desperate. Indeed, our level of achievement is substantial, but the true value of the exercise for us is in pinpointing areas for consolidation and where greater effort must focus in the next five years.

Mr. Carrión Mena (Ecuador), Vice-President of the General Assembly, took the Chair.

From this point forward, Samoa would need to work hard to maintain our current gains and to further improve our performance particularly on those goals where our track record to date has not been satisfactory. Amongst these is the proportion of the population living below the basic needs poverty line, particularly when considered against the gains achieved in the overall economy through a growth-oriented macroeconomic policy framework.

Additionally, we need to ensure that there is expanded and comprehensive coverage and effective service delivery of preventive measures for children's health through greater community participation. Similarly greater emphasis would be placed on further strengthening a rights-based approach to facilitate universal access for women to such reproductive health services as voluntary family planning, information and counselling.

Samoa recognizes that gender equality, the empowerment of women and their full enjoyment of all human rights are essential to economic and social development, including the achievement of all MDGs. The empowerment of women through increased representation in Parliament will continue be a challenge, given existing social structures. However, we have set out under MDG 3 the reality of the situation of Samoan women. This, as well as the full record of Samoa's performance over the past 10 years, is contained in Samoa's Millennium Development Goals second progress report for the year 2010.

The global recession and other crises, natural and man-made, have constrained our efforts, even with the best of political will. The aftermath of the tsunami that struck Samoa almost a year ago inevitably affected the progress of our MDG-linked efforts. However, the support of the international community, particularly our development partners and friends of Samoa worldwide, ensured that recovery was not delayed and that our MDG work could therefore be brought back on track. We are very grateful.

In a few days' time, the United Nations will review the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action after its first five years. The Mauritius Strategy provides a comprehensive blueprint for addressing the national and regional sustainable development of small island developing States (SIDs) like Samoa. In many ways, the Millennium Development Goals would also be considered as a normative framework for SIDs' development targets, and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation as providing some of the key inputs for their achievement.

Thus, within the architecture of the different United Nations global frameworks, the Mauritius Strategy should continue to be a primary vehicle through which the international community must engage with the small island developing countries in order to assist them respond effectively to their special vulnerabilities. The success of the Strategy would necessarily support the achievement of the MDGs.

Isolation from the rest of the world is a vulnerability common to all the Pacific SIDS and remains a major impediment to the growth of their economies. Overcoming this remoteness would enhance the islands' resilience to the many challenges they face individually and collectively. Infrastructure development, particularly in telecommunications, will provide the answer to much of the region's development needs across the board in terms of distant education, telemedicine, tourism, education, health, fisheries and agriculture. The availability of such critical infrastructure would greatly reduce the digital divide and the islands' isolation, and ensure the sustainability of their economic development.

Finally, the draft outcome document of our meeting should re-energize the resolve of our Member States to deliver on their respective commitments and responsibilities; if it does not, the success of our global undertaking for a better future for the world will continue to remain elusive.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Yves Leterme, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium.

Mr. Leterme (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my country, Belgium, I would like to convey four messages that we consider to be essential.

First, we believe that the core objectives of our common efforts for development are and should always be human development and poverty eradication. Human development is much more than a matter of economic growth or environmental policy; it is about putting people at the centre of development and helping them to realize their potential, enhance their choices and enjoy the freedom to decide their own futures. And poverty is much more than a lack of income and material wealth. It is also a factor for social and cultural exclusion and, in practice, prevents the enjoyment of fundamental rights. Putting people at the centre of development is giving access to education and to culture in the broad sense.

Our second message today is an alarm bell. The major stumbling-block on the road to achieving the MDG's is growing inequality — inequality not only between countries and between North and South, but also within countries themselves. There is now plenty of evidence about growing disparities within a majority of countries. Unfortunately, reports on the Millennium Development Goals often do not reveal this, as the targets and indicators have been designed to measure progress by means of averages. This can lead to the paradox whereby a country as a whole progresses, while some population groups — the underprivileged,

women and rural populations, for instance — are worse off in relative and even in absolute terms.

Mrs. Graça Mandela-Machel denounced this when she pointed out

> "the obscene gap between those many struggling poor and the few who are rich. ... The 'first world' also exists in the southern hemisphere. ... There are rich people in Africa amidst abject poverty."

United Nations reports show how gender disparities are at the very heart of the inequality issue: gender inequality in education, inequality in access to decent work and inequality in the benefits of health care, along with the alarming fact that in developing countries only one out of three rural women receive the recommended care during pregnancy.

Thus in our view, dealing with inequalities is the priority among priorities. This is not only a matter of fairness; it is also a matter of sound economic management, for lower inequality tends to be correlated with economic growth that is more durable.

This leads me to a third message: concrete progress towards achieving the Millennium Goals is not only a matter of financial means, but is also a matter of political will and good governance in each country.

Policies that succeed in reaching the Millennium Goals will be policies geared towards inclusive development, policies that aim at maximum citizen participation in wealth creation and at creating opportunities for the poorest populations. That necessarily requires accountable, participatory and efficient governance that enables people to have a say in the way in which they are governed, in the way decisions are made and implemented and in the way resources are allocated.

To quote the Zambian agronomist and lecturer Tamala Tonga Kambikambi:

> "An effective, stable and accountable Government is essential in the fight against poverty. It should protect human rights, provide security, promote economic growth and deliver essential services."

Finally, my fourth message is a reminder of our collective responsibility and of the global partnership for which the Millennium Declaration calls. This idea of global partnership led most donor countries — decades ago, it should be said — to commit themselves to increase their aid volume to 0.7 per cent of their GDP. In spite of the financial and economic crisis, Belgium has reconfirmed this target in its 2010 budget.

Moreover, the solution to global problems we are discussing requires not only global government but also global financing. As one of the initiators of the group that considers innovative financing, we work hard for a broader agreement on the subject, within the European Union but also on a worldwide scale.

Beyond quantities of aid however, we should, more than in the past, look at aid allocation and aid modalities. Aid policies should first help countries to take their fate into their own hands and make them less dependent on aid.

The partnership we desire is one among countries that are more aware than they are today of their responsibilities and conscious of their duties, with some being in a position to help and others realizing they can be helped only if the help themselves.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Klaus Tschütscher, head of Government, Minister for General Government Affairs, Minister for Finance and Minister for Family and Equal Opportunity of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Tschütscher (Liechtenstein): Ten years ago world leaders gathered in New York and agreed on the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), one of the noblest efforts ever undertaken in the framework of the United Nations. The world's leaders promised to spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the centrepiece of the most broadly supported multilateral development campaign in history. They constitute the benchmark by which we will measure success in 2015 and are one of the landmark achievements of the Organization. The Millennium Declaration was complemented by the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), which firmly established that development, peace and security, and human rights are interlinked. The activities of the United Nations are based on all three of these equal and complementary pillars.

We welcome the adoption of the outcome document (A/65/L.1) later this week as an important reaffirmation of the international consensus in the field of development. The constructive and successful negotiation process has strengthened the United Nations as the centre of global governance. The outcome document presents concrete measures that will help us achieve each of the MDGs.

All efforts towards realization of the MDGs are mutually reinforcing because all the Goals are interlinked. Unfortunately, some crucial challenges that will have to be addressed as a matter of priority have not received the required attention in the outcome document. Armed violence and conflict, for example, are a constant threat to human security and the rule of law and as such represent a major impediment to development. Preventing and ending armed violence and conflict must be at the core of every sustainable development effort. That requires, in particular, determined action to eradicate impunity for those who use violence against civilians as a tactic of war.

With two thirds of the road to 2015 behind us, we have a wealth of experience with factors conducive and detrimental to sustainable development. We know that development achievements remain fragile if they are not supported by serious efforts to strengthen good governance, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality and an active civil society.

Liechtenstein continues to support such efforts by prioritizing education projects in its bilateral development assistance, with a particular emphasis on projects empowering women. We are also keenly aware of the problem of illicit capital outflows from developing countries. This problem must be addressed on both the demand and supply sides.

We have been a long-standing supporter of initiatives that build good-governance capacities, for example through the fight against corruption and the recovery of stolen assets that have been transferred abroad. Liechtenstein fully implements international standards against money laundering, as well as internationally recognized standards of transparency and exchange of information in the field of tax cooperation.

The international partnership for development is of particular importance for the achievement of all MDGs. As of today, our official development assistance (ODA) represents about 0.6 per cent of our gross national income. We fully recognize the benchmark of 0.7 per cent ODA as an internationally agreed development goal and will continue to do so, despite temporary domestic budget constraints as a consequence of the financial and economic crisis.

Liechtenstein is particularly committed to addressing new development challenges in connection with climate change. We have signed the Copenhagen Accord and already set aside the first round of new and additional funds to help developing countries address these challenges.

The international partnership for development is an undertaking that entails collective and individual responsibility. A renewed commitment is needed from all of us to achieve the MDGs by 2015. This gathering provides a unique opportunity to do so. We can still succeed if we stand united.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh): I am pleased to address the High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I am particularly pleased because I was one of the 189 Heads of State and Government who adopted the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs during the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000. The Millennium Declaration is the Magna Carta for a poverty-free world, and I am glad to have been a part of its adoption.

The MDGs, which aim at facilitating development and eradicating poverty, were adopted by an unprecedented consensus. This consensus was reinforced by world leaders at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. The MDGs have given us a benchmark to measure the performance of national Governments, private sectors, civil bodies, development partners, the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies. The benchmark also provides an opportunity for assessing progress in achieving the internationally agreed development targets.

During my last tenure as Prime Minister, our Government took steps to mainstream MDGs in our national development plans. The aim was to ensure national ownership of the MDGs and to demonstrate

our commitment to achieving them by the stipulated deadline of 2015. The planning and budgeting process since 2001 thus sought to achieve the MDGs as part of our national development.

During our present tenure, we have set a five-year plan to achieve the MDG targets as a step towards making Bangladesh a middle-income country and establishing a digital Bangladesh by 2021, the golden jubilee year of our independence. We are on our way to finally achieving *sonar Bangla*, or "golden Bangladesh", as dreamt by my father and the father of our nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

However, the world food and energy crises of the past years, the ensuing global economic recession, world trade decline, dismal investments and the impact of climate change have retarded our pace for achieving the MDGs. Yet Bangladesh has been able to achieve satisfactory progress with the support of the United Nations system and bilateral and multilateral partners.

Our achievements on MDG 1, on poverty alleviation; MDG 2, on universal primary education; and MDG 3, on gender equality and the empowerment of women, are encouraging and on track. As for MDG 4, our excellent progress was recognized this year by the MDG Awards Committee, the United Nations Millennium Campaign and the United Nations Office for Partnerships with the prestigious United Nations award for reducing child mortality. Projections indicate our success in lifting 12 million people out of poverty by 2015, thereby reducing poverty by half by then, as targeted in MDG 1.

Our success also includes enhancing minimum dietary energy consumption, net enrolment in primary education, gender parity in primary and secondary education, reducing child and infant mortality, improving immunization coverage, rolling back malaria, controlling tuberculosis, low prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and improved access to safe drinking water and sanitation. But we are facing difficulties in achieving other MDGs for lack of resources, such as those on the reduction of underweight children, maternal mortality and income inequality; the completion of primary education; adult education and the ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education; antenatal care; the vulnerabilities of women; health for all; the planned use of land and urbanization; creativity; human capital and social justice.

A formidable challenge confronting Bangladesh are erratic and frequently occurring natural disasters due to global warming, which are pushing climate migrants into our overburdened cities and posing a threat to our achievement of MDG 1 by 2015. Estimates indicate that a 1-metre rise in sea level would submerge a quarter of our land mass, displacing 30 million people and making it difficult to sustain a poverty-free post-2015 era. One in every seven persons in Bangladesh would be a climate migrant due to the excessive greenhouse gas emissions of industrialized countries. Sadly, while climate forums debate adaptation, mitigation, technology transfers, a green fund, the unfortunate plight of climate migrants is deftly sidetracked. I urge the global community to be sensitive to this emerging challenge and to find innovative ways for their rehabilitation.

We deeply appreciate the Secretary-General's report, "Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015" (A/64/665). The report concludes that the MDG track record is mixed and underlines that, at the global level, there exist normative and implementation gaps in terms of addressing the core development issues. Findings from the recent United Nations Development Programme report "What will it take to achieve the MDGs?", indicate that the MDGs are achievable when nationally owned development strategies, policies and programmes are supported by international development partners. Bangladesh is in full agreement with these findings.

Moreover, Bangladesh is committed to playing a part in attaining the MDGs by 2015. While the countries of the developed world are also committed to doing the same, they need to demonstrate their sincerity by helping to reduce the implementation gap. Clearly, the answer lies in fulfilling their official development assistance commitment of 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to developing countries, and of 0.2 per cent to least developed countries by 2010, as reaffirmed in the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries.

Meanwhile, with United Nations assistance, Bangladesh has prepared a document entitled "MDG Needs Assessment & Costing Report 2009-2015" for Bangladesh. The report indicates that $22.1 billion will be required to attain all MDGs in Bangladesh from 2009 to 2015, implying an outlay of $4.4 billion a year.

A substantial portion of these funds has to come from development partners. These estimates take into account global declarations on resource flow to developing countries, especially the least developed. The Monterrey Consensus in particular is a cornerstone of this ambitious resource budgeting.

Although Bangladesh seeks the external assistance it needs, its absence has never halted our programmes. We continue with our domestic efforts, as we did in the area of sanitation and water supply, where external support fell short by $560 million.

I would like to refer to a seminal comment made by Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Chair of the United Nations Development Group and, as the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, co-signatory of the Millennium Declaration, who said, "If we are to reach the MDGs by 2015, then 2010 must spark five years of accelerated progress".

I agree with Ms. Clark that the global recession, the food and fuel crises, the challenges of climate change and natural disasters have generally complicated the road to 2015. But they do not make the MDGs unattainable if we collectively determine and partner to achieve them. Let us rise and resolve in that spirit as one community in a globalized world to achieve all our internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, thereby serving ourselves, our progeny and our posterity.

In conclusion, I would like to pledge Bangladesh's resolve and commitment to the achievement of the MDGs and beyond. We will achieve self-sufficiency in food by 2021, but we will try to do so earlier. We will ensure 100 per cent net enrolment at primary school level by 2011, eliminate gender disparity at all levels of education by 2014, raise the economic participation of women to 40 per cent by 2021, reduce maternal mortality by 15 per cent and infant mortality to 15 per 1,000 live births by 2021, increase life expectancy to 70 years by 2021, provide safe drinking water for all by 2011 and hygienic sanitation by 2013, and achieve a digital Bangladesh for global connectivity by implementing our national information and communications technology policy by 2021.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mizengo Pinda, Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Pinda (United Republic of Tanzania): Much has happened as we have made national, regional and global efforts to rid the world we share of abject and unconscionable poverty and to bring decency to the lives of our fellow human beings. We are here to recognize the progress achieved and celebrate the valuable partnerships and experiences that have brought us this far and that should now form the bedrock of renewed efforts as we seek to accelerate progress based on lessons learned.

It is true that much remains to be done in the five years that remain until the target date of 2015, but we cannot afford to be discouraged. It is true that progress has been uneven and that some of the targets will not be met unless efforts are significantly stepped up. But it is also true that the strength and resilience of the human spirit, if fully harnessed, can make the impossible possible and the difficult easy. This meeting therefore provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm our commitments and galvanize needed support at all levels to ensure that all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are met in all regions of the world by 2015.

My Government believes that the United Nations is best placed to coordinate and track global commitments and efforts to ensure the achievement of the MDGs, in particular in those on which we are lagging behind. We welcome and support the United Nations Strategy on Women's and Children's Health and commend the Secretary-General for his vision and leadership in the development of the Strategy.

Partnerships lie at the core of the successes achieved and will determine the level of success we will ultimately achieve. Such partnerships include bilateral and regional partnerships between developed and developing countries, as well as between developing countries themselves. They include the United Nations system, as well as partnerships with the corporate world and civil society. Without such partnerships, there is little hope. Let us reaffirm them.

The United Republic of Tanzania reaffirms its commitment to achieving the MDGs. Policies conducive to achievement, including economic and governance reforms, have spurred economic growth averaging 7 per cent over the past decade, but that is

not enough to achieve all of the MDGs. These policies will need to be further strengthened.

Poverty, as measured by the proportion of population earning below $1 a day declined from 38.6 per cent in 1991-1992 to 33.6 per cent in 2006-2007 for the Tanzania mainland, and from 61 per cent in 1990 to 49 per cent in 2004 for Zanzibar. This decrease does not give us much hope.

In Tanzania, more than 80 per cent of the entire population, which is estimated to be 40 million, live in rural areas. These 80 per cent depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. If we are to emancipate most Tanzanians from poverty, investments in agriculture are imperative. In realizing this fact, the Government has embarked on the comprehensive Agriculture First initiative, popularly known as Kilimo Kwanza, with the aim of accelerating a green revolution. The Kilimo Kwanza initiative is comprised of the training of agriculture extension officers; investing in irrigation infrastructure systems and mechanization, in particular the use of modern technologies including agro-processing; and use inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides. Furthermore, the initiative aims at addressing the critical problem of agricultural financing.

In order to realize these objectives, the Government has continued to increase its budget allocation to the agricultural sector and to take measures to improve agriculture marketing systems.

If the Government is to realize the ambitious goals enshrined in the Kilimo Kwanza initiative, we appeal to the institutions of the United Nations, the international community, the private sector and other development partners to support our efforts. Given timely and predictable support, Tanzania will undoubtedly realize MDG 1, as we have managed to do with regard to MDG 2. We can also do so for the others.

HIV prevalence rates declined from 7 per cent in 2003 to five per cent in 2008 on the Tanzanian mainland. We are pleased that in Zanzibar the rate has remained at 0.6 per cent.

Zanzibar has done very well on the issue of malaria. The prevalence of malaria shows a drastic decreasing trend, from 49.2 per cent in 2000 to 0.8 per cent in 2009. That outstanding performance puts Zanzibar in the pre-elimination phase. The challenge is to hold on to this achievement and ensure that Zanzibar is totally free from malaria, as well as to replicate those measures in mainland Tanzania. The achievements in Zanzibar are a result of key cost-effective interventions for prevention — namely, insecticide-treated nets, indoor residual spraying and intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancy — and case management with effective drugs.

In the area of child mortality, we have made a little progress. Between 1990 and 1999, there was an 11 per cent reduction in under-five mortality rates, from 165 per thousand live births to 147 per thousand live births, whereas infant mortality rates increased from 91 to 99 per thousand live births during the same period. Over the past decade, there was a 45 per cent reduction in the under-five mortality rate and a 49 per cent reduction in the infant mortality rate. Over the same decade, neonatal mortality, which accounts for 50 per cent of infant deaths, decreased by 35 per cent.

Zanzibar has also made significant progress in the reduction of under-five and infant mortality. The under-five mortality rate dropped from 202 per thousand live births in 1990 to 101 per thousand in 2004/05, and the infant mortality rate dropped from 120 per thousand live births to 61 per thousand live births in 2005.

Achievements in child health are attributed to health sector reforms, increased coverage of effective interventions, immunization, vitamin A supplementation, integrated management of childhood illness, improved malaria control through insecticide-treated nets and access to effective antimalarial treatment.

We have done well on the education targets. In 1990, the net enrolment ratio in primary education was 54.2 per cent for mainland Tanzania and 50.9 per cent for Zanzibar. In 2000, the rates went up to 57.1 per cent for mainland Tanzania and to 67 per cent for Zanzibar. In 2006, the ratio increased to 94.8 per cent for mainland Tanzania and 77 per cent for Zanzibar. The net enrolment ratio continued to increase, reaching 95.4 per cent in 2010.

We realized all these results through good policies, budgetary increases, comprehensive education programmes and a participatory approach that allows people to be in the driver's seat. These factors have made it possible for the Government to expand capacities to recruit more teachers and increase education materials and classrooms.

We are committed to do all in our power to accelerate the implementation of the remaining MDGs in the next five years. We will strive to do much on our own, including focusing on economic growth and sustainable development. But to succeed we count significantly on similarly renewed and expanded commitment on the part of our development partners. We know what works in achieving the MDGs. With the requisite leadership, partnership, commitment and resources we have the opportunity to keep the millennium promise to the world's people. Let us not fail them.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Gilbert Fossoun Houngbo, Prime Minister of the Togolese Republic.

Mr. Houngbo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset I would like on behalf of the Togolese delegation to convey to the Co-Chairs my warm congratulations on their election.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) remain and will continue to be relevant for all development actors, and all of our efforts should therefore be aimed at achieving results, which are the foundation of our duty of solidarity for a world committed to peace and justice.

With respect to my country, since 2006 Togo has profited from the calm in the political climate to relaunch the economic and social development process. Thus my Government adopted its national long-term development strategy, which is based on the MDGs, and that strategy has formed the base for drafting our Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The investment costs under the strategy have been estimated at $7.2 billion between 2006 and 2015.

We have taken measures to improve good governance, we have taken measures to improve the rule of law, and we have taken measures to foster transparent management of public finances, to optimize mobilization of domestic resources and to reinvest in sectors that promote growth and in social sectors.

We have also greatly facilitated access for farmers to fertilizers and improved seeds. We have taken measures towards better organization of agricultural producers and the opening of agricultural areas, among other initiatives. Those measures explain the surplus production and economic growth — modest, yes, but sustained at more than 3 per cent — that Togo has registered despite the world economic recession. In fact, I am certain that the growing contribution of small farmers to the increase in production, beyond the base level of food security, will be one of the principal levers to bring about growth of the Togolese economy to at least 7 per cent, so as to reverse the trend to poverty.

The framework for acceleration of MDG 1 has permitted us to analyze the obstacles to the improvement of agricultural productivity and to propose solutions for acceleration that have already been proven. For MDG 1 this entails financing needs of $225 million, whose mobilization will make possible advances in wealth creation and poverty reduction in rural areas. We also need to further invest in infrastructures to continue to provide better access for areas of production, create markets and process our products.

In the area of education, the establishment of free primary education has enabled us to improve schooling rates from 74 per cent in 2006 to 87 per cent in 2008. But in the long term we cannot focus all our efforts solely on primary education. It is important also to invest in secondary and higher education — and especially in research.

With regard to health, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS has been cut in half, and care for affected persons has been improved by improving access to free treatment. With respect to infant health, integrated campaigns for vaccination and for the distribution of treated mosquito nets have enabled us to considerably reduce infant mortality rates.

We should therefore like to thank all of our partners, who, for a number of years in the wake of the Brussels conference, have been providing us with crucial assistance. This progress, which is still tentative, needs to be consolidated and expanded to other areas, such as access to drinking water, sanitation, protection of the environment and adaptation to climate change. We therefore firmly hope that the values of international solidarity and justice, without which the United Nations will never be able to meet the many challenges of our time, will prevail at this session.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi.

Mr. Rufyikiri (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Burundi is possible for some targets, but for others there is a long road to travel. In order to better understand the progress that has been made and the difficulties encountered, I would like to briefly explain the sociopolitical conditions that have had a deciding influence on the pace of social and economic development in Burundi.

Burundi is a country in a post-conflict situation. Starting in 1993 and over the course of a decade, it has experienced a serious sociopolitical crisis. Of course, that has had a negative impact on development programmes and on the implementation of the MDGs in particular. However, I would point out that Burundi has just reached an historic stage, and I would like to express my satisfaction and that of my Government at the fact that the international community and Burundi's partners have recognized that there has been progress in the areas of security, development and democracy.

In 2005, democratic elections were organized, putting an end to the period of civil war. The Government that arose from those elections, as soon as it assumed power, began addressing the issue of the MDGs and undertook significant efforts to achieve them, despite the time lost due to the war.

As the first five-year mandate has now come to an end, general elections have just been carried out successfully, from May to September 2010, in a spirit of transparency and fairness. The international community and civil society in Burundi, acting through their observers, have witnessed the determination of the people of Burundi to consolidate their achievements in the areas of peace, democracy and reconciliation.

Although Burundi has only just emerged from a conflict that lasted several years, the Government that has led the country over the past five years has spared no effort to achieve the MDGs on time. The determination and the commitment of President Pierre Nkurunziza and the successes achieved in this area by Burundi have been welcomed by Burundians and the international community.

The situation in Burundi with regard to progress made in achieving the MDGs shows that some target areas have seen improvement as a result of the proactive policies adopted by the Government that took power following the 2005 elections.

For example, on MDG 2, Burundi is set to achieve this Goal, thanks to the measures taken by the Government since 2005 to provide free primary education. In particular, we are happy to see that the net percentage of children in school has gone from 53 per cent in 1990 to 90 per cent in 2009.

On MDG 3, Burundi has made significant progress in eliminating gender inequalities in primary as well as secondary education. The objective of gender parity should, normally speaking, by achieved by 2015, given that the ratio of girls to boys was estimated in 2009 to be 0.87 for primary education and 0.72 for secondary education. As to representation in institutions, women currently represent 32 per cent in the national assembly, compared to 12 per cent in 1993. I would also point out that women currently account for 44 per cent of the senate and 42 per cent in the Government.

MDG 6, target 2, concerning the prevalence of malaria and tuberculosis, should be achieved by 2015. Of course, that will involve a lot of effort. A positive development in this area is the significant reduction in the prevalence of malaria and the number of deaths due to this illness. This is due in part to the high number of mosquito nets distributed in 2006.

On MDG 7, it is very probable that Burundi will achieve target 2, since significant progress has been made with regard to access to clean drinking water, which has increased from 47 per cent in 2000 to 64 per cent in 2005.

On MDG 8, Burundi has made significant progress, in particular with regard to strengthening dialogue with its partners and national ownership of its development policy, which enabled my country to reach, in January 2009, the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and witness a progressive increase in the flow of official development aid since the 2005 establishment of democratic institutions.

Mr. Deiss (Co-Chair) returned to the Chair.

Burundi is also proud of the progress made with regard to MDGs 4 and 5, thanks to the presidential initiative in 2005 to provide free health care to children under five years of age, pregnant women and women in labour. This has brought about a fivefold increase in the proportion of births attended by health-care personnel between 1990 and 2008.

Significant progress has been made with regard to the abovementioned MDG targets, and we do hope to reach them by 2015. But that is not the case with others, in particular the elimination of extreme poverty and hunger, the reduction of the spread of HIV/AIDS, access to sanitation and safe housing, the preservation of biodiversity of forest zones, the mobilization of official development assistance that is compatible with the achievement of the MDGs, and access to markets and to new information and communications technology.

Therefore, sufficient resources must be provided for us to reach these Goals and targets, the majority of which we are in the process of achieving, and to overcome the challenges. The Government elected this year is more determined than ever to make significant progress on achieving the MDGs. Among the strategies planned is the commitment of the Government to lay out the guidelines for successive strategic frameworks for growth and for the fight against poverty, beginning with the second generation of those policies in 2011.

We urgently call on the international community, and in particular our partners, to take into account the needs of the people of Burundi, who are so eager to reap the dividends of peace and reconciliation. Burundians are very much aware of how great these challenges are, and they want more than ever to continue to benefit from the many different forms of political and financial support from the international community. The international community has thus far shown enormous willingness to help Burundians, and we welcome that.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. George Rebelo Chicoti, Secretary of State for External Relations of the Republic of Angola.

Mr. Chicoti (Angola) (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the holding of this important event, which offers us a unique opportunity once again to discuss frankly the state of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and to launch new ideas to help realize in a more effective manner the commitments we have assumed. My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In his report entitled "Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015" (A/64/665), the Secretary-General stressed that several countries have obtained very positive results in the fight against extreme poverty, have improved their levels of school attendance, children's health and access to potable water and HIV/AIDS treatment and have made strides in the fight against malaria, tuberculosis and tropical diseases.

Nevertheless, 10 years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), attainment of the Millennium Development Goals themselves is still far from being a reality. The fight against poverty cannot be won only with the holding of conferences and summits to negotiate more commitments to development. Overcoming hunger and poverty primarily requires that we implement the international commitments we have already made, for otherwise we would be locking ourselves into an unproductive and repetitive cycle.

The international community must ensure that these commitments are translated into concrete actions. National policies should be supplemented and supported by international efforts aimed at creating an overall environment that is conducive to their implementation. Therefore, while we defend the principle of national responsibility, we urge the strengthening of regional and global partnerships for development. Eradicating extreme poverty continues to be a big challenge of our time and represents a major concern for the international community. Hence, it requires that Governments, civil society and the private sector join forces as part of a closer and more effective partnership for development.

Eliminating hunger and poverty, improving the provision of public services such as health care and education, reducing child mortality, respecting the environment, building adequate infrastructure, eliminating social exclusion in all its forms and achieving gender equality are ambitious but attainable goals. Accordingly, it remains important to include the Millennium Development Goals in national strategies for poverty reduction and in national development plans.

We attach great importance to this meeting, because we believe that all is not lost. We must act swiftly and wisely in order to ensure that from this year

forward there will be a better dynamic capable of contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed commitments.

I would like to draw attention to a number international mechanisms already agreed upon, which have been applied inconsistently or simply ignored.

First, increasing official development assistance would boost economic and social sectors that are facing difficulties, leading to improved living conditions for people. In short, it would create greater social welfare.

Secondly, reform of the international financial architecture is now a pressing need, since it is evident that the world needs an international financial system that is more agile, more dynamic and responsive to the needs of developing economies. Also in this framework, international financial institutions should play a greater role.

Thirdly, deregulating international trade, especially reducing farm subsidies and eliminating trade barriers for agricultural products from developing countries, would boost free competition in international markets and would strengthen the agricultural sectors of developing countries.

Fourthly, increasing investments in agriculture in Africa in the context of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme must not only be encouraged, but also supplemented with the construction of roads that are necessary to transport goods from farms to cities as well as to stimulate the industrial sector.

Fifthly, the creation of an integrated microcredit programme for small and medium-sized farms and other small producers has proved in many countries to be an effective means of combating poverty.

And finally, the global partnership for development, as called for in Goal 8, and the broadening of international cooperation are vital to achieving the other Goals.

Collectively and individually, all countries that are combining the efforts of their public and private sectors should feel obliged to fight tenaciously to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, especially in African countries where the situation is particularly difficult. We are convinced that Africa has potential and that, once it is supported by the international community, it will be able to overcome challenges in order to make possible the economic growth and sustainable development of the continent.

The right to development, along with other rights, is enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and we believe that the Millennium Declaration is a vehicle for the realization of this principle, for its vision and provisions remain pertinent.

Shortly after the war ended in 2002, Angola started a broad national reconstruction and poverty reduction programme. However, the international economic and financial crisis and the adverse effects of climate change have seriously affected the economic performance of most developing countries, and they have not spared the gigantic efforts that Angola had previously begun. Nevertheless, Angola has seen improvements in all basic MDG indicators. More than 2 million children have been enrolled in primary education since 2002. The percentage of children attending school has risen substantially, by 76 per cent. Child survival has increased by 20 per cent, and the percentage of children suffering from malaria has dropped by 23 per cent.

With respect to health sector commitments, we hope to reduce the transmission rates of major infectious diseases including AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis by 2015 and to drastically reduce mortality of children and women. Figures are beginning to be encouraging as a result of strong investments in infrastructure, especially hospitals. Between 2000 and 2006, more than 250 hospitals were built throughout the country, resulting in a reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates from 1,400 per 100,000 live births in 2001 to 660 per 100,000 live births in 2008. Moreover, in order to eradicate hunger and poverty, Angola has adopted a national strategy for food security for the period 2009-2014, which will enable us to increase agricultural production in a sustainable manner.

Fighting hunger and poverty seems to my country to be a central pillar of harmonious and sustainable development. It enables us to ensure respect for human rights while at the same time providing adequate living conditions for all citizens. The Republic of Angola hereby expresses its strong commitment to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration through mechanisms that include the building of human and

institutional capacities, good governance, gender equality and the continuous improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the people.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. George A. Papandreou, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic.

Mr. Papandreou (Greece): Ten years ago, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expressed a realization: the realization that we are all in this together. Whatever the problem, wherever it hits, sooner or later it will affect us all. In our interdependent world, there is no problem that can be dealt with in isolation and no country that is immune to job losses, environmental disasters, pandemics or the whims of the financial markets. We know this well in Europe, and our Union has created a stronger potential to deal effectively with many of these challenges.

In Greece, our recent experience has given us real insight into how one small country's problems can ricochet around the world. The Greek people have taken unprecedented steps to overcome our fiscal crisis. It is a painful process, but we are making real progress and delivering on our commitments, and we will emerge stronger — with one prerequisite: we decided to change. Greece is not a poor country. But did we manage our resources, our environment, our human capacity prudently, transparently, equitably, sustainably? No, we did not. And that is what we are challenged to change.

But is that not also the core challenge of our Millennium Development Goals: to manage our planetary resources, our human capacity, our amassed capital, our amazing technological advances, our commonwealth of knowledge in a much more responsible way; to manage our resources in a way that respects our natural resources, respects the rights and needs of all our people and respects the well-being of future generations?

In Greece, we are dealing with more than simply a sovereign debt crisis. The world is not dealing simply with a financial crisis. We in Greece — and all of us — face fundamental challenges: to revitalize our democracies and ensure good governance, to redefine what we mean by quality of life, to change our consumption patterns in order to stimulate clean, green growth around the world, and to do so in an equitable manner.

This is why in Greece we have launched radical reforms to make our Government more transparent, our institutions more efficient, our economy more competitive and green, and our society more just. We are delivering these changes with our citizens and not in spite of them.

But we are also more aware than ever before of the need to work together to change our world for the better. Environmental disaster and climate change are wiping out positive gains made in the economies of so many countries and are putting new burdens on the poor. And this affects us all. There is the example of women. If women are illiterate in parts of the world, they will suffer more violence, they will be unable to plan their families and they will be less likely to contain pandemics such as HIV/AIDS or malaria. They will bring up children who are more desperate, more marginal, more violent. And this, in the end, affects us all. So even though Greece is facing daunting challenges in its economy, we plan to contribute development aid in areas such as green growth, health, hunger, poverty alleviation, women's rights and freedom from violence.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the Secretary-General on the appointment of Michelle Bachelet to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). But we need to transcend our national boundaries and work together for another reason. Around the world, many of our citizens — I would say, particularly our youth — feel disempowered. They know that we have the resources to make poverty history, to wipe out illiteracy, to prevent pandemics, to protect women and children and to protect biodiversity. But they also know that we are not managing our resources and capabilities to do so effectively. That is why our citizens question our political will to move forward as a global community. They expect — and rightly so — political leaders to do more to correct the imbalances and inequities that the current system of global governance has created.

Underlying our failure to act on our good intentions is a crisis in governance — democratic governance, global democratic governance. Our national institutions lack the capability to deal with global issues. At the same time, the concentration of power, capital and media has enabled privileged elites with vested interests to capture our democratic processes.

So we must step up to the challenge to strengthen our local and global democratic institutions with greater urgency and resolve. We must prove that our democracies can protect and empower our citizens and equalize opportunities, and that the benefits of globalization can be fairly and evenly distributed. We need to create new tools that will optimize the use of our resources, change financial incentives and redistribute wealth. A financial transaction tax, a carbon tax or green bonds could be used to fund education, health care, green infrastructure and technology, particularly in developing countries.

Instead of national austerity, we ought to be thinking in terms of global responsibility. Yes, we need to manage sovereign debt, but we also need to plan for social protection, decent jobs and green growth. Unless we join forces to face the challenges ahead, we will all remain vulnerable to new crises. Either we provide direction, vision and action for a sustainable world society, or we will be subject to more conflict, poverty and suffering.

The Millennium Development Goals have challenged us to develop global governance that will empower our citizens in order to transform the world of free markets into a world of free people. We will either have politics of solidarity, or we will have politics of fear, xenophobia and scapegoats. Either we humanize globalization or globalization itself will undermine humanity. The choice is clear, and it is time to act.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Reem Ibrahim Al Hashimi, Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates.

Ms. Al Hashimi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): The United Arab Emirates supports the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) out of its conviction that the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a main factor for the maintenance of peace and security and the realization of prosperity throughout the world. Today, we renew our support for the Declaration and affirm our intention to continue working to achieve the Goals by the year 2015, as we have pledged.

The recent prevailing international economic, political and security conditions have demonstrated how the interests and concerns of the countries of the world are interlinked. The economic crisis and its aftermath proved that no country is safe from its impact regardless of its isolation or local economic conditions. The United Arab Emirates strongly believes that success in achieving the MDGs requires an effective and solid global partnership within the framework of the agreed recommendations of the Millennium Declaration and other development conferences and forums.

While we recognize that the global economic and financial crisis led to recessions in developed donor countries, we urge those countries not to withdraw their commitments and to keep working towards earmarking 0.7 per cent of their gross national income for official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries. We also urge them to take effective steps to alleviate or cancel the debts of developing countries and to provide them with new technology to help them build environments conducive to sustainable development.

In this context, we emphasize the importance of reforming the international economic, financial and trade systems so as to allow developing countries the opportunity to play an active role and to participate in the international market in a just and equitable manner. At the same time, we urge developing countries to adopt economic policies that encourage production and help attract foreign investment.

The United Arab Emirates strove successfully to contain the aftermath of the global economic and financial crisis and its impact on our development achievements so we could honour our commitments and maintain our foreign aid contributions for development. Our success in achieving the MDGs at the national level has allowed us to enhance our contributions to the global partnership to assist developing countries in achieving their development goals as quickly as possible.

We have exploited our oil revenues to expand and diversify sources of national income while, at the same time, maintaining a focus on human development in all fields. In a short period of time, we were able to eradicate poverty, raise the average income per capita, provide free universal education at all levels, and achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

At the same time, we are working to ensure the sustainability of the environment and the realization of a comprehensive national strategy to integrate an environmental vision into all development activities,

while mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing emissions.

The United Arab Emirates has adopted a foreign policy focused on cooperation and bilateral and international partnerships to achieve development in other countries. The Emirates is one of the major donors in the international partnership for development. A number of national institutions make foreign development contributions that constitute a high percentage of our gross national product and are distributed as ODA to approximately 100 developing countries around the world. Ninety-five per cent of that assistance is given as grants, while the rest is distributed as concessionary loans. About 80 per cent of these contributions are directed to major development projects in education, health, infrastructure and energy in those countries.

For instance, the Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan Foundation, founded in 2007 by our Head of State, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, provides relief and development assistance to developing countries and those affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts. It also finances development projects, including health and social centres, in more than 35 countries in Asia, Africa and Europe.

The Dubai Care Initiative founded by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, works to provide primary education for 4 million children in 14 developing countries to fight poverty, empower citizens, and achieve development within the framework of MDG 2.A, on universal primary education.

The United Arab Emirates plays an effective role in strengthening international assistance, be it in emergency or long-term cases such as natural disasters and armed conflicts. In 2009, the United Arab Emirates donated approximately $3 billion in humanitarian and development assistance, with a special focus on the countries most affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its commitment to continuing to work to realize the MDGs and to strengthen the international partnership to implement them by 2015. In this regard, we call for the intensification of international efforts to address the root causes and challenges that hinder the timely achievement of the MDGs, and to find effective and permanent solutions for them all.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Kamel Morjane, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia.

Mr. Morjane (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Let me say how pleased I am to take part in this High-level Plenary Meeting to assess progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and identify the means to attain them on schedule.

It is widely agreed that development is a fundamental aspiration of all countries. Guided by our strong commitment, we adopted the Millennium Declaration, which reflects the aspirations of the peoples of the world to a better life through the realization of a carefully selected series of objectives defined by numerical benchmarks and clear timeframes. We have agreed to halve the rate of poverty, promote primary education at the global level, enhance gender equality, reduce mortality among children and mothers, fight AIDS, ensure sustainable development, preserve the environment and build a global partnership for development.

Although many countries have managed over the past decade to achieve significant progress towards attaining some of the Millennium Goals, we note that the pace of this progress is still slow and has not met global expectations, due to the huge development challenges that most countries, particularly those of Africa, are facing. Many relevant reports have pointed to the slowdown of progress due to the acute world economic crisis.

Economic projections for African countries that register a growth rate below 3 per cent anticipate an annual growth rate below the required 7 per cent, which is too low to help them realize the Millennium Development Goals within the fixed timeframe. The achievement of the development goals in our African continent will require financing the economy, investing in the health and education systems, and additional efforts to fight poverty and ensure early education, laying the foundations of a dignified life for African citizens.

We are convinced that the establishment of a genuine partnership with Africa represents the most suitable way to advance development in the continent, help achieve our development goals and bring hope to

millions of Africans. In this regard, we call on the Group of Eight and the Group of 20 to renew their commitment to the African continent so as to enable it to attain its development goals. We are also of the view that the support extended through North-South cooperation in the endeavour to meet development goals will never outweigh the scope and importance of South-South cooperation in promoting economic and social development in Africa.

Attaining the Millennium Development Goals on schedule will require us all to work in solidarity and to pool our sustained efforts. In this spirit, allow me to highlight the success of the Tunisian national solidarity experience in promoting development in poor areas. Our experience demonstrates the utility and effectiveness of this policy, which earned international recognition through the adoption of resolution 57/265 endorsing the establishment of the World Solidarity Fund, designed to help poor countries advance their achievement of the MDGs.

Although my country, Tunisia, is a medium-income country with limited natural resources, it has managed through self-reliance to achieve significant economic development over the past two decades, enabling it to enjoy a high ranking in human development indicators.

Our national report on the Millennium Development Goals, prepared jointly by the United Nations and the Tunisian Government, underscores the progress achieved by Tunisia with regard to sustainable development. This report stresses that the increase in gross domestic product reached 5 per cent in recent years. Owing to the fair distribution of economic growth income, the poverty rate witnessed a sharp decline from 60 per cent in 1960 to 7 per cent in the mid-1990s, and to 3.8 per cent at the current time. More important, the report underlines the tremendous progress achieved by Tunisia in meeting the remaining Millennium Development Goals. The report stresses that my country will succeed in attaining these goals, if not exceeding most, by the year 2015.

Tunisia has pursued sound development policies based mainly on reconciling the requirements of an efficient economy and dynamic social policies to ensure the fundamentals of a decent life. This comprehensive development vision arises from the firm belief that there is an inextricable link and interdependence among all dimensions of development, and that there is no progress in the absence of economic prosperity. Moreover, there can be no sustainable economy in the absence of social peace and national concord. Indeed, comprehensive development consecrates social justice and ensures the fair distribution of growth dividends in all areas and to all sectors of the population, while preserving and enhancing social assets and gains. It also helps to improve the living conditions of vulnerable sectors of the population with specific needs and to enhance solidarity among various national components.

Thanks to this sound policy, and despite the turbulent international economic climate, our country has managed in the aftermath of the unprecedented financial and economic crisis to secure various achievements and progress in all sectors, and succeeded in minimizing the impact of the volatility of world markets on the national economy by taking timely and appropriate measures to safeguard the development process, which continues apace to achieve positive results. Tunisia has also achieved tremendous progress in schooling at all levels and a significant improvement in health and demographic indicators, including medical coverage, life expectancy at birth and the extension of social security.

Among Tunisia's various achievements, income has continued to rise, the poverty rate has witnessed a sharp decrease and job creation has continued to grow, thus improving living conditions in different areas, especially in rural ones, where genuine progress in terms of access to electricity and drinking water is noticeable.

The world of 2015 will be what we make of it. It will be a pure reflection of our common success or common failure to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and afford the means to ensure a decent life free of need and anxiety about the future for all people. In conclusion, I would like to express my best wishes for the success of our summit and to thank all participants for listening.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. R. M. Marty M. Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Repulic of Indonesia.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): This High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is timely, considering the fast-approaching 2015 target date. The urgency of this

Meeting is further accentuated by the turn of events in the past years that have stalled efforts on the MDGs.

As highlighted by the Secretary-General earlier, while some parts of the world are well advanced in meeting the MDGs, overall implementation is lagging. We must ensure that the multifaceted, multidimensional and interconnected challenges and crises that our world is facing do not derail our gains towards achieving the MDGs. This Meeting reminds us that we have to stay engaged. Indeed, we need to redouble our efforts. Failure is not an option.

The adoption of the MDGs a decade ago was a groundbreaking moment and certainly a major achievement for the United Nations. The Goals inspired a rebalancing of the security paradigm to strengthen development as a way of realizing freedom and peace. Since their adoption, the MDGs have been a beacon for development policies, guiding development strategies at all levels. Central to the successful transformation envisioned 10 years ago are the mobilization of national, regional and international efforts. Each has vital function to perform in a mutually reinforcing way.

First, at the national level, each respective Government needs to create policies and have the fiscal space to accelerate and sustain progress. The MDG targets also need to be included in our respective national development agendas. However, and more importantly, a mechanism to monitor progress needs to be put in place. Not least, Governments should encourage all stakeholders — including the private sector and civil society — to take ownership of the Goals.

For our part, Indonesia's commitment to achieving all MDG targets is strong and unwavering. We have embraced all eight MDGs. They are consistent with the basic fabric of our national development policies and strategies and are an important feature of Indonesia's foreign policy. We have made significant strides to improve water and sanitation, education and health. In support of the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health launched by the Secretary-General, we have also introduced a policy to provide free birth care for all mothers.

With regard to climate, we have been implementing domestic programmes to reduce emissions by 26 per cent by 2020 and, with international assistance, to reduce them by 41 per cent. Intensifying actions to curb deforestation, enhance reforestation and promote renewable energy is key in this regard.

As to some aspects of the MDGs, we are an early achiever and we hope that further efforts will contribute significantly to reducing the maternal mortality rate and halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Secondly, at the regional level, all regional organizations and initiatives can contribute to achieving the MDGs by promoting coordination and cooperation among countries, which should contribute to the attainment of the Goals by the countries of the region. There should be a mechanism to further monitor MDG targets. There should be a machinery to accelerate the closing of remaining gaps.

We realize that not all countries in our region have fully achieved the MDGs. As part of our responsibility to ensure success in achieving the MDGs in our region, Indonesia recently held in Jakarta the Special Ministerial Meeting for the Millennium Development Goals Review in Asia and the Pacific: Run up to 2015. In that regard, I have the honour to transmit to the Assembly the declaration of the Jakarta Special Ministerial Meeting on the MDGs as a concrete contribution of the countries of Asia and the Pacific to this High-level Meeting.

The Ministers recognized that, while Asia and the Pacific as a whole have made progress on some of the MDGs, there are still gaps between and within countries. To address these gaps, the Ministers resolved, inter alia, to address the extreme poverty of 900 million people residing in the Asia and Pacific region. The countries of Asia and the Pacific region reaffirmed their determination to achieve their commitments on social protection, financing and environmental sustainability, not only on the basis of their strong individual convictions, but more importantly by engaging in honest partnership with all stakeholders.

Thirdly, at the global level, genuine global partnership is imperative. The MDGs are a project for humanity. They are not only for the North; they are also not only for the South. They are for all humankind. The commitments of our development partners should be fulfilled. Innovative mechanisms for mobilizing resources should be further explored.

South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation should be further strengthened.

Ultimately, our long-term objective is to have a prosperous, peaceful, safe and stable global society. Achievement of the MDGs by all is an important step towards realizing these long-term objectives. However, much remains to be done now and post-2015. Achieving the MDGs by 2015 must not be our end goal. Efforts to build on the MDGs must be continued beyond 2015. To this end, we must strengthen our national efforts and promote partnership at the global level in support of these efforts.

Mr. Carrión-Mena (Ecuador), Vice-President of the General Assembly, took the Chair.

In closing, the promise of creating a global society that is prosperous, peaceful, safe and stable is one that must be fulfilled. And today we have the opportunity to contribute to fulfilling it. We cannot let the opportunity lapse. That objective requires all of us to work together as part of a global society, for the benefit of our people, for the next generations and for the sustainability of our planet.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Elmar Maharram oglu Mammadyarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Mammadyarov (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in expressing my deep gratitude to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for this well-organized High-level Plenary Meeting. I am confident that this Meeting will be an important step forward in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015" (A/64/665), which reviews the successes, best practices and lessons learned, obstacles and gaps, and challenges and opportunities leading to concrete strategies for action in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Despite the ongoing military occupation of about 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan by our neighbour, the Republic of Armenia, and the resulting presence of almost 1 million refugees and forcibly displaced persons in our country, the Government of Azerbaijan reiterates its strong commitment to fully and effectively implementing the MDGs by 2015. We have completed the progress report on the implementation of the MDGs in 2010. Let me now briefly share Azerbaijan's perspective on and experience in working to achieve the MDGs.

With respect to Goal 1, on reducing poverty and extreme poverty, Azerbaijan has demonstrated the political will and has implemented a number of consecutive steps to eradicate poverty. Our political will was clearly stated in the first State Programme for Poverty Reduction and Economic Development and is reflected in the new State Programme for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development (2008-2015). The main objectives of the latter Programme include, inter alia, ensuring sustainable economic development, significantly decreasing the number of poor, protecting vulnerable groups, improving the living conditions of refugees and internally displaced persons, improving and providing equal access for all to health and education services, ensuring sustainable management of the environment, supporting gender equality and so forth. To this end, through the successful implementation of the Programmes we have managed to reduce the poverty rate from 29.3 per cent in 2005 to 11 per cent in 2010.

We also give high priority to eliminating unemployment. In this regard, the Government has launched a special State programme for the implementation of the employment strategy, reducing the unemployment rate from 7.06 per cent in 2005 to 6 per cent in 2009.

Regarding Goal 2, on achieving universal primary education, the relevant reforms for improving the quality of school education have been launched. Our education reform strategy for the period 2003-2013, supported by the World Bank, is focused mainly on reforming general compulsory education. Within this framework, we have adopted a new programme for preschool education. We declared 2009 the Year of Children in Azerbaijan to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The relevant action plan was adopted to address the special needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable children, with particular emphasis on efforts aimed at promoting children's rights and encouraging their talents.

Regarding Goal 3, on gender equality and women's empowerment, a coordinated set of measures — such as the adoption and implementation of a national action plan on women's affairs, a presidential decree on a policy for the self-realization of women, the establishment of a State committee for family, women's and children's affairs, and many others — have laid a firm legal and institutional foundation for the achievement of gender equality, the provision of secondary and higher education for women, equality in salaries, and the broad involvement of women in the decision-making process. There have been increases in women's representation in Parliament and Government bodies.

Regarding Goals 4 and 5, on child and maternal mortality, sustainable progress in this area will depend on poverty reduction and further improvements in access to and quality of health services through primary health care reform. Azerbaijan is committed to reducing child and maternal mortality by half by 2015 and has taken coordinated steps to that end. With the adoption of State programmes for protecting the health of mothers and children, a national strategy on reproductive health, and a State programme for regional social and economic development for 2004-2008, our child mortality rate has fallen to 3.1 per cent in the past five years.

Of all the MDGs, Goal 5 on improving maternal health, with its related targets — reducing maternal mortality rates by up to three-quarters by 2015 and achieving universal access to reproductive health care — requires additional effort. In practice, the full realization of this Goal demands financial resources and technical assistance that many developing countries can hardly afford.

Regarding Goal 6, on HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases, Azerbaijan has so far managed to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS and malaria, and has succeeded in improving the prevention and cure of tuberculosis. The national response to HIV/AIDS has also been considerably strengthened in recent years, with a major reorganization of the National AIDS Centre.

Regarding Goal 7, on environmental sustainability, we have to work on reversing the loss of our forested areas, and to ensure that environmental concerns are taken into account at all levels of policymaking. We have announced 2010 as the Year of Ecology and have adopted various special programmes in the area of environmental protection.

Regarding Goal 8, on developing a global partnership for development, Azerbaijan is determined to contribute to the realization of the development goals agreed within the United Nations, and is fostering global cooperation in all spheres, paying particular attention to addressing the special needs and vulnerabilities of developing and least developed countries.

We have launched and successfully implemented several regional infrastructure projects that have made a significant contribution to the development of certain neighbouring countries. Taking into consideration that information and communications technology is viewed as an important instrument for fostering economic growth and competitiveness and for contributing to poverty eradication and social inclusion, the Government of Azerbaijan has launched an initiative to jointly build and manage a Trans-Eurasian information superhighway, which is expected to facilitate supplying the countries of the region with Internet and telecommunications systems, e-information resources and e-economies.

In conclusion, I would like to express my hope that this High-Level Plenary Meeting will contribute significantly to mobilizing the efforts of all Member States in achieving the development agenda of the United Nations and creating a better future life for all of us.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ricardo Patiño Aroca, Minister for Foreign Affairs, External Commerce and Integration of Ecuador, who is, as it happens, my respected compatriot.

Mr. Patiño Aroca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Three years ago, the President of Ecuador asked us to demand more of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to go beyond poverty reduction and to bring about social change capable of overcoming inequality. Then we would not need to speak of goals of human subsistence, measurable by market consumption figures, but rather of the joy of a dignified life for all our peoples. With that, we would move beyond social well-being, not merely reducing the distances between human groups but also bridging enormous economic, territorial, environmental and cultural chasms. We must give renewed prominence to collective action, restore

the value of the public arena as the space in which the actors of our civil societies interact as a function of their collective interests, guaranteeing and ensuring access to justice and to all their rights: the rights to work, to recreation, to artistic creation and to life lived well.

That is also the path that could lead us to finding peace among our nations. I say this because my country is concerned that social issues are not given the central importance they deserve when we consider the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On the contrary, what we have seen increase is one of the pathological aspects of the policy of military spending. As a global phenomenon, it now totals $1.531 trillion. This represents an increase of 49 per cent since the start of the millennium, and constitutes the greatest obstacle to our achievement of the MDGs. The persistence of hunger in the world contrasts most strongly with this military spending globally, since the first Millennium Development Goal is that of reducing the number of poor people in the world.

It is clear that, so long as military spending is growing in most countries, investment in social spending will not be of prime importance to the Governments of many of our societies. That is why my country would exhort everyone to demonstrate the political will to reverse the direction of such policies, so that we may come here not to present poverty reports but rather to report on how we have overcome inequities. If we cannot bring political earnest to solving the problem defined as our first global goal — eliminating hunger and extreme poverty — how can we tackle the other MDGs?

As President Correa said three years ago, we believe that it is possible to act collectively, consciously and democratically to take charge of our lives and organize world society in a different way, with a more human face. If we fail to do so, we will continue to live in a world of war, with hundreds of millions of hungry people, and with the threat of major humanitarian catastrophes caused by climate change. That is how we have understood things in Ecuador, and that is why we can tell the whole world that we need to move beyond the language traditionally used by States and Governments. How can we believe in countries that seem to support and commit themselves to pioneering initiatives such as the MDGs, and that in fact have not honoured or acted according to them?

In Ecuador, we can cite statistics from the past three years to show that we have improved the quality of life of our people. These statistics attest to the reduction of poverty during these years from 61 per cent to 53 per cent in rural areas as a result of a social investment of almost $1.5 billion, double that of the previous seven years. Today, we allocate 8.3 per cent of GDP for these expenditures, compared with 2.8 per cent previously. We are on track in achieving our goals.

With respect to equality in education, let me note that we have doubled our investment in education and have made it universal. We have taken action to eliminate illiteracy and have implemented an intercultural policy by providing teaching materials in the original languages of our indigenous peoples.

In the health sphere too we have doubled public investment in recent years, and we have succeeded in reducing infant morality. It is our hope that we will achieve the figure of 11.8 deaths per 1,000 live births, which goes beyond the goal of reducing infant mortality by two thirds compared with 1990. We are making similar progress on maternal health and are building infrastructure and providing services to previously marginalized populations.

There is a lot to say about sustainability of the environment. I would mention the Yasuni-ITT initiative, policies for human mobility and the promotion of worldwide partnerships, through enhancing multilateralism and regional integration as effective strategies for making progress on social development. Yet we believe that little has been done to date.

We do not wish merely to attain the Millennium Development Goals. We want to build societies marked by development and equity. That will be possible only if we rebuild the global structures of trade, finance, technological innovation and power structures in such a way that they enable us to foster social development. This requires unity among peoples and Governments who will be determined to build — completely independently — this new international economic and political order. Any other path will lead to failure.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Murray McCully, Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand.

Mr. McCully (New Zealand): I welcome the opportunity to review progress towards the

achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to identify steps we might take that will improve progress.

I come from the South Pacific — a region that according to recent reports sits second only to sub-Saharan Africa in terms of lack of progress towards achievement of some of the Millennium Development Goals. New Zealand is a small nation of 4.5 million people. We have limited resources. We cannot be major players in development assistance on a global scale. And so, we have decided increasingly to deploy our resources within our region, where they are most needed and where we can make a difference.

Those resources are greatly needed within our region. The effects of the global economic crisis have been severe even for the most robust of Pacific States. Budget support has been required by many. Other forms of supplementary assistance have also been required. But that is at the easy end of the spectrum.

At the tougher end of the range we have places like South Tarawa in Kiribati, with 50,000 people crowded onto a narrow atoll with a population density similar to that of downtown Hong Kong, in poor housing, frequently with highly polluted water, minimal sanitation and minimal solid waste disposal, and with all of the attendant health and humanitarian challenges one would expect as a consequence. Given its position only a couple of metres above sea level, Kiribati is better known in this forum for its climate change challenges. But climate change is merely one of the challenges confronted by the Government and the people of Kiribati. This and other parts of the South Pacific remain at the very lowest end of the register in relation to some MDG outcomes.

Some might observe that, given the population levels in our region, we are dealing with small numbers. These are problems that should lend themselves to relatively easy solutions. But they have not and they do not. Some will suggest that it is merely a matter of more money being provided, of donors being asked to dig deeper. Despite the effects of the global economic crisis, most nations are digging deeper. New Zealand is digging deeper. But more money alone will not solve these problems. We need a much greater focus on aid effectiveness. And we need to place a much higher premium on donor coordination.

On that latter point, New Zealand is a strong supporter of the Cairns Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination in the Pacific, a product of the Pacific Forum, which we hope will lead to a significant lift in donor coordination in our region. Already we have achieved a high level of coordination with our friends and neighbours in Australia in relation to our shared work within the region. But we have a long way to go to achieve better harmonization of efforts amongst donors generally.

With regard to aid effectiveness, without in any way diminishing the health and humanitarian programmes that we continue to support, we have decided to focus on sustainable economic development, in particular on the building blocks for sustainable economic development in the region. Already we are significant funders of education within the South Pacific. We want to do more of it and do it better, especially on basic literacy and numeracy. We are substantially upgrading our efforts in horticulture, agriculture, fisheries and tourism. In each of these sectors, Pacific nations have considerable potential for economic growth. We are trying to remove the barriers to trade, so that we can start to correct the major trade imbalances within the region. And we are giving serious attention to transport infrastructure, air and sea, for these are the essential arteries for tourism and trade.

A major feature of all Pacific States is that their economies suffer severely because of a dependence upon electricity generated from imported diesel, usually at a far greater cost than would be encountered elsewhere. We are trying to drive a major programme of investment in renewable energy infrastructure, especially solar and wind. This is essential to achieve both climate change and economic objectives.

My final point is to echo the sentiment expressed by other speakers who have called for follow-up actions to match the fine words we have heard during this meeting. I share the optimism of those who believe we can make better, faster progress. But it will not be because we have established new committees or new procedures, or developed new slogans or new acronyms. We need to get more practical: to focus on outcomes, not process. And we need more cooperation and less duplication. Those are the essential challenges we now confront.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Oldemiro Balói, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique.

Mr. Balói (Mozambique): On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, and on my own behalf, I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating the Co-Chairs of this important High-Level Plenary Meeting of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that, under their enlightened and skillful guidance, our deliberations will be crowned with success.

Allow me to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of this gathering aimed at reviewing the progress, obstacles, challenges and strategies in strengthening our collective resolve and partnership for the effective realization of the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

When Mozambique joined other nations 10 years ago in adopting the Millennium Declaration, the country was aware of the challenges it would face in meeting the Goals set therein. Indeed, since the first years of its national independence, Mozambique has been engaged in the attainment of some of the Goals set, which are part of our national development programmes and strategies to fight poverty and promote economic growth.

At this point in time when, only five years before 2015, we would like to briefly share our evaluation and fundamentally point out our reflections regarding the path Mozambique is to take towards meeting the MDGs, as reflected in the 2010 edition of our national progress report, which is available in this Hall.

In this regard, allow me to focus this intervention on MDGs 4 and 5, on reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, as we believe that investing in women and children's health constitutes an unequivocal way of investing in social and economic development while at the same time meeting the remaining Millennium Development Goals.

Women and children's health care indicators have shown some progress since the adoption of the MDGs that is reflected in the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates. It is obvious that these indicators show the path that our country and our people have yet to take in order to meet the objectives defined for our children's and women's health care. It is also obvious that, for our Government, the issue of women's and children's health care goes beyond being simply Millennium Development Goals, as they constitute permanent development goals of our country and, above all, represent the social justice to which all of our people aspire.

Our Government's main focus is to ensure that women in Mozambique give birth without the risk of facing death, that each child born is able to grow and attain his or her full development, and that five years should no longer be an unattainable age limit. The desire to bear life should not represent a threat and sorrow for our women. Our experience during these past years has seen some actions of particular importance and great impact in improving health care and reducing maternal and infant mortality rates. Among these actions, we would like to highlight the following.

First, recognizing the impact of social factors in community health, we favour the implementation of joint measures undertaken by various Government sectors aimed at increasing access to clean water and basic sanitation, mainly at the rural community level.

Second, we implement programmes that promote the presence of girls at school. We would like to take this opportunity to point out that, at this point in time, Mozambique has almost reached parity between boys and girls at the primary school level.

Third, since the first years of our independence, women and children have had free access to health care. This free access has had a great impact on access to differentiated health care, such as caesarian deliveries, for pregnant women, with a major impact on the reduction of maternal mortality.

Fourth, throughout the years we have established a strong relationship between the Government and local communities. While guaranteeing families' capacity to adopt basic domestic measures that help in dealing with conditions that threaten children's and women's health, with a focus on the prevention of mortality due to malaria, respiratory infections and children's diarrhoea, and in the identification of signs of danger to pregnant women. Today in Mozambique, we have a network of community workers who galvanize the communities in adopting domestic practices for the prevention of diseases as well as for the protection of health, particularly that of children.

Fifth, recognizing the country's limited number of doctors, at a very early stage Mozambique took the initiative to train non-doctor, middle-level technicians to offer differentiated surgery care, including caesarians for pregnant women with labour complications.

Sixth, the need to increase access to and the use of health services by women, in particular during pregnancy and labour, led us to invest in the expansion of the network of health facilities, particularly in the construction of maternity wards as close as possible to communities and, at the same time, to prioritize the training of maternal and infant nurses. It is worth mentioning here that the lack of human resources in Mozambique constitutes a major challenge for our Government in meeting all of our goals.

Seventh, as an example of success in community mobilization, we would like to mention the national movement that was created through the implementation of a children's and women's presidential health care initiative though which, after reflection and consultative meetings at the national level, various similar meetings were held at the provincial and local levels that contributed to a dramatic increase in the level of awareness of women's and children's health. In the past couple of years, we have actively participated in advocacy actions at the global level through our involvement in the activities of the network of global leaders tackling Millennium Development Goals 4 and 6.

Although progress has been made, the current international context poses a threat to this trend, as we have witnessed in the negative impacts of climate change, the food and fuel crisis and, more recently, the global economic and financial crisis. In this regard, and with only five years to the target date for achieving the MDGs, it is now imperative that we all reinvigorate our engagement to implement the commitments made in Monterrey. We therefore hope that the draft outcome document of this High-Level Plenary Meeting will reflect that urgency. Indeed, we expect that the donor community will ensure sufficient financial support to developing countries. For our part, we would like to stress our firm commitment to implementing sound social and macroeconomic policies and good governance and, in the long term, reducing dependence on external aid by increasing national revenue, making sustainable use of natural resources, improving the investment climate and promoting broad-based economic growth. Once again, investing in women's and children's health is investing in the survival of a nation. We therefore recommit ourselves to continuing to place health care for women and children at the top of our development agenda.

Let me conclude by saying that, by fulfilling these and other relevant internationally agreed commitments, we will be able to successfully address the remaining challenges in attaining the social well-being of our people.

The Acting Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Urmas Paet, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia.

Mr. Paet (Estonia): The framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represents a unique global effort and the most significant promise ever made to reduce poverty and inequality worldwide. In order to keep our promise and provide hope, it is essential to learn from our past experience. We should keep in mind that what worked well in one context may not be a success elsewhere.

To date, the global record is mixed, as pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/64/665). It draws attention to important gains, but also to significant areas where much still remains to be done. There has been insufficient progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women, which is an area that has one of the largest multiplier effects on other Millennium Development Goals.

As a result of various crises, there are higher rates of unemployment, malnutrition and hunger. There are still areas with unacceptably sharp discrepancies. For example, while almost all births are attended by skilled health personnel in developed countries, less than half of women in parts of the developing world receive such care.

There are also success stories that I would like to touch upon. First is the remarkable progress in overall poverty reduction. More and more children go to school, and their health has improved. More people have access to clean water, and remarkable success has been achieved in fighting malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS. No less important is the fact that the MDGs have directed more attention to the issue of development worldwide. That has influenced governmental spending priorities and aligned

development priorities more closely with poverty reduction.

I would also like to touch upon the connection between achieving the MDGs and human rights; the two notions are strongly interconnected. Estonia entrusts the United Nations system with a central role in supporting national Governments in the achievement of the MDGs. We also supported that role in the discussions on United Nations system-wide coherence reform. Estonia warmly welcomes the consensus reached on that reform a few months ago, which paved the way towards a more efficient and coherent United Nations operational system (see resolution 64/289).

I welcome the historic consensus achieved just a few months ago on the establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, or UN Women (see resolution 64/289). I note with satisfaction the Entity's positive impact on strengthening the ability of the United Nations to address the gaps in its activities on gender and to support countries in promoting gender equality. I would like to congratulate Ms. Michelle Bachelet on her appointment as Under-Secretary-General for the Entity, and look forward to her strong leadership in making it fully operational by 1 January 2011. For that purpose, Estonia has already decided to make its first contribution to UN Women.

I would like to draw attention to the important link between information and communications technology (ICT) and development, as the MDG framework includes a commitment on access to technologies. Estonia has experienced the relevance of that goal in the past 20 years. For us, the development of ICT has truly been a crucial engine for economic progress and modernization. ICT solutions have provided better access to information for our citizens. ICT has enabled them to participate at all levels of decision-making; it has improved transparency in governance and provided new methods to fight crime and corruption. Based on that experience, I call for an adjustment of development paradigms. In today's world, ICT should not be a luxury good, but part of the basic infrastructure. That is why ICT networks need to be developed in parallel with other infrastructure projects, such as roads, ports and energy systems.

With the help of the United Nations Development Programme and the Open Society Institute, Estonia has established a special agency to assist Governments in developing countries with advice on and training in electronic governance and the use of ICT in public services. Estonian experts are currently advising Governments all over the world. In several countries, we support the development of an interoperability network for better governance and for making public services more transparent and efficient. We have also assisted computerization projects aimed at putting contemporary ICT systems into use in educational systems.

As for education, which is the best engine for innovation and growth, I am glad to note that significant progress has been made in sub-Saharan Africa, where school enrolment has increased fivefold since the 1990s.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) returned to the Chair.

Estonia is firmly committed to supporting the global achievement of the MDGs by 2015. Since initiating our first development cooperation project in 1998, Estonia has become an international donor. Today, development cooperation enjoys a steady place on our foreign policy agenda, and its importance is growing year by year.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Thambwe Mwamba (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to congratulate the Co-Chairs on their joint appointment to preside over this High-level Plenary Meeting, thus demonstrating the great importance that the General Assembly gives to development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

This meeting marks the start of the final countdown to the deadline for attaining the Millennium Development Goals: only five years remain. That is a short time if the pace, slow at best, and the current trends continue. However, it will be enough if, from now on, we all decide to reverse those trends, implement the commitments undertaken and thereby express our international solidarity to achieve the Goals.

We are convinced that, with the appropriate means to act and sufficient financial resources, the Millennium Development Goals can be achieved in all developing countries in general, and in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo in particular. We are aware and we are convinced that achieving the Millennium Development Goals is primarily the responsibility of each country. It is up to us, therefore, to ensure the implementation of appropriate policies and the mobilization of sufficient support to take us out of poverty.

We are also aware of the domestic constraints that have so far hindered implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and hence sustainable development in general. These include the lack of quality data to indicate progress made and guide decision-making, the gap between commitments and payments of resources pledged within the framework of the many African initiatives, conflicts and the continuing economic and financial crisis.

Notwithstanding those obstacles, there is reason to believe that developing countries as well can achieve essentially all of the Goals, provided that they strengthen their efforts and, in particular, increase financial investment in the public sector and encourage private business.

With respect to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my country, we are working to intensify our efforts to create an enabling environment and an investment climate favourable to development of the private sector in order to make up investment shortfalls and attract foreign direct investment, in particular through tax incentives and eliminating red tape.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has made noticeable progress towards achieving some of the Millennium Goals. That progress includes net enrolment in primary schools, adult literacy, parity between boys and girls in primary education, and the political empowerment of women. The participation of women in decision-making processes and their representation in the national parliament have increased. Immunization rates for children have improved; mortality for children under 5 years of age has been reduced and the transmission rate of HIV/AIDS slowed. Substantial progress has also been achieved in the fight against tuberculosis, and the proportion of children sleeping under insecticide-treated nets is showing a marked and continuous increase.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has also increased its earnings due to its economic growth through austerity measures, discipline and a civic tax required of everyone. My country is working to reform the security and justice sectors and to improve control within its public administration in order to manage staffing levels.

Such good governance efforts have enabled my country to recently achieve the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. However that work has not yet ended. We must strengthen the national statistics system, which since February 2010 has been governing the generation and use of statistics in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We must advance decentralization and promote land reform. We must work to protect the environment as the cornerstone of our efforts to protect species and ecosystems.

Those efforts will not suffice and enable us to achieve the Millennium Goals without a global environment that is favourable to achieving development. Additionally, with regard to our partners, both bilateral and multilateral, each as it is concerned, we must secure the necessary changes in attitude.

We recognize the praiseworthy efforts of our development partners to improve their assistance to developing countries. We also acknowledge, as I mentioned earlier, that implementation of the Millennium Development Goals lies first of all with us. But our international partners must also honour their pledges and support the strategies implemented by the developing countries. If our partners wish to see our countries achieve the Millennium Goals, they will need to increase official development assistance, as so often promised. From that standpoint, we recall the Monterrey Consensus and all the other commitments made.

We must break down barriers that continue to impede implementation of an international treaty to regulate the arms trade, because in countries such as mine the uncontrolled circulation of those lethal devices maintains in our countries and the entire subregion an unstable situation that prevents implementation of development programmes.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a post-conflict country, where implementation of the Millennium Development Goals meets with more challenges than elsewhere. Clearly it is impossible to assess today the consequences of the conflict for implementation of the Millennium Goals. Thousands of women have been raped and subjected to violence.

Millions of children have no possibility of attending school because they are constantly on the move to flee the war, and people have been forced to abandon their fields and herds and small-scale or subsistence-level economic activities. Thousands of men, women and children have been infected through no fault of their own with HIV/AIDS and various sexually transmitted diseases or suffer from malaria. Many women also die from giving birth in inappropriate conditions.

Because of all that the Democratic Republic of the Congo requests that it be included among the priority programmes of development partners, with more flexible assistance and financing modalities. We need sustained assistance and action to consolidate peace and security and our national institutions, to train our armed forces and police, to create jobs for youth, in particular to keep them occupied, to strengthen the State's capacities to provide quality social services, to resettle the many displaced people and to accelerate the strategy to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation — REDD-plus — in short, to bring about sustainable development and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo we remain convinced that with good international governance and in working together, achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 is possible, in order to eradicate hunger and poverty and put the developing countries, both individually and collectively, on the path to growth and sustainable development.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Hoshyar Zebari, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq.

Mr. Zebari (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on co-chairing this high-level meeting on the follow-up to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed upon by our leaders in 2000. We are sure that the experience of the Co-Chairs will be a main factor in the success of our work in the light of the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

In the year 2000, our leaders defined the basic goals for bringing about sustainable development for all. That would be accomplished through various actions to eradicate poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce child and maternal mortality, fight HIV/AIDS, preserve the environment and establish a global partnership. In general, we support the provisions of the draft outcome document to be adopted at this Meeting (see A/65/L.1).

Certainly, some progress has been made in achieving the Goals, including with regard to the elimination of poverty. There has also been progress with regard to international cooperation and solidarity in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals — even though, five years from the target date for attainment of the MDGs, more than a billion people are still living in extreme poverty. If significant progress is not made during these five remaining years, there will be negative consequences for all of our societies, which will create fertile ground for instability, terrorism, violence, epidemics and environmental degradation. In our view, the MDGs can be achieved with political will, sound policies, adequate resources, committed efforts and international cooperation.

The economic situation in Iraq has improved significantly thanks to the financial, economic and investment legislation adopted by our Government. As a result, personal income and individual purchasing power and prosperity have increased. The Iraqi Government has prepared an ambitious budget for 2010 not only to provide for reconstruction, but also to build a healthy and strong economy as we move forward.

On 4 April, the Iraqi Government launched a five-year national development plan for 2010 to 2014. It sets out some 2,700 strategic projects in various areas at an estimating a cost of $168 billion, to develop the Iraqi economy and improve the quality of services provided to Iraqis. The plan will create around 4 million jobs and will thus contribute to addressing the problem of unemployment in Iraq.

Iraq's efforts to attain the MDGs include enhancing the agricultural sector and improving agricultural products by providing subsidies to farmers. This will help to provide more food, reduce extreme poverty and hunger, increase household income, improve nutrition and health care services and reduce the level of infant mortality and post-partum maternal mortality.

In the area of primary education, we are rehabilitating and reforming the education sector, after the arbitrary war launched by the previous regime

against its neighbours and its people and after the violence and destruction that Iraq has experienced since the fall of that regime. The rehabilitation effort has been extended to all Iraqi provinces, including rural areas, and a programme to raise social awareness has been carried out to warn children not to leave school early. Iraq is planning to overcome all obstacles and restrictions that stand in the way of girls pursuing primary, secondary and university education. An awareness-raising campaign has also been carried out to address social customs which sometimes prevent girls from attaining a university education. Social protection measures for women have also been adopted, including laws that ensure employment equality between men and women. There are three women Cabinet ministers in Iraq and women ambassadors represent Iraq in important countries. Women make up 25 per cent of members of parliament. That is the highest proportion of women members of parliament in the region.

In the area of health, the Ministry of Health has strengthened the health care infrastructure and increased the number of hospitals, pharmacies, health care centres for pregnant women and centres for chronic and epidemic diseases. Health care training takes place in Iraq and abroad with the help of United Nations specialized entities in order to improve national capacity, create health care centres and provide health care to all citizens, particularly in rural areas and for poor and young people of both sexes.

Global partnership is seen as the cornerstone of international cooperation. We are currently engaged in cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programmes as part of our international partnerships for reconstruction and for building a liberal economy integrated with other countries in the region and worldwide, as well as for improving the social and economic conditions of our people. The Iraqi Government has also adopted significant economic measures at the global level and has met its commitments to the International Monetary Fund. It has concluded bilateral agreements with trading creditors to address and adjust the debt it inherited from the previous regime. Iraq has accomplished a lot in this area and has managed to reduce by 80 per cent its debts to the Paris Club. We hope that other creditor States will act in the same way with a view to reducing our bilateral debt.

Finally, development remains primarily a national responsibility and can be driven only through national ownership and national leadership. Development takes its characteristics from national and regional capacities and specificities, and national resources play a large role in designing a country's development strategy. There is no pre-established strategy that can be applied throughout all areas of development.

The next five years will require continued work by all in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Iraq hopes that this period will be decisive and that it will lead to a qualitative leap in Iraq's development, thus contributing to stability and progress in the region.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alvin Bernard, Minister of State of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Mr. Bernard (Dominica): I commence by congratulating the Co-Chairs on the effective manner in which they have been conducting this High-level Plenary Meeting so far.

During the first five years of this millennium, slow but steady progress was being made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Globally, there was a reduction in the number of persons living in extreme poverty and hunger, greater access to primary-level education and a reduction in child mortality.

That progress, however, has been stymied, and some gains have been reversed as a result of the world food crisis in 2006 and the energy crisis of 2007. The global economic and financial crisis in 2008 exacerbated the situation, with a more pronounced impact on small, open and vulnerable economies like ours. These crises brought into sharp focus the interconnectivity of the world's economies. In order to overcome these challenges and to move apace with the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, a global approach is required. It is paramount that such a global approach recognize the central role of the United Nations.

With only five years left, we need to intensify our efforts. A good starting point is the fulfilment of the commitments made in the Monterrey Consensus of 2002. This must include the reconfiguration of the international financial institutions to take into account

the special needs of developing countries. The international financial institutions must take on the role of facilitators of development, without preconditions which are too onerous and in most cases alien and impractical to the countries where the institutions' prescriptions are being applied.

These efforts must complement the Doha Development Agenda. Developing countries must be given a fair chance to participate in the global trading system. The recognition of the special and differential status of developing countries, especially small island developing States with small, open and vulnerable economies, is critical to their survival in what has become a hostile global trading environment. This will ensure that developing countries have a better chance to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in a sustainable manner.

Another area requiring urgent attention is the contribution of official development assistance and technology transfer. To date, the contributions of most developed countries to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals have been commendable. Their contributions, at both the bilateral and multilateral levels, have made a significant contribution to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. But as was alluded to earlier, there needs to be a greater role for the United Nations in this process within a framework that is transparent, equitable and predictable.

In spite of the many challenges, Dominica has been able to make some major achievements in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals. We have been able to make these achievements through sound fiscal policy, strong political leadership and the hard work of our people. The developed countries, especially the States members of the European Union, continue to be reliable partners in our development efforts. Over the past five years we have seen an unprecedented collaboration in the context of South-South cooperation with China, Cuba, Venezuela and Libya. These interventions have been in the areas of social and physical infrastructure development. These partnerships have led to a marked decrease in household poverty in Dominica from 39 per cent in 2002 to 28.8 per cent in 2009. Per capita income has also moved, from $11,430 in 2005 to $14,184 in 2008. In 2005, we achieved universal secondary education. This programme provides equally for boys and girls.

The Caribbean region has been heavily affected by HIV/AIDS. The efforts by our regional Governments to date, in partnership with the Clinton Foundation, the Pan American Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) are commendable. The education and public awareness programmes have brought the issues of HIV/AIDS to the fore. We look forward to continued assistance by UNAIDS and other partners in public education programmes and the provision of drugs, which will help to improve the quality of life of those who are affected.

The prevalence of chronic non-communicable diseases is also of concern to us in the Caribbean. Earlier this year, the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) sponsored General Assembly resolution 64/265 to bring international focus to the increasing threat of non-communicable diseases. We look forward to a high-level meeting during the current session, which will provide the framework for combating non-communicable diseases.

Dominica has been dubbed the nature island of the Caribbean. This is due to prudent environmental policies supported by legislation and the well established practices and traditions of our people. Consequently, we have been able to protect our water catchments, rivers, beaches, forests and marine reserves and to enjoy the sustainable use of our natural resources. In that light, the effects of climate change have also made us more vulnerable to natural disasters. These pose real threats to our ability to continue to work towards the achievement of the MDGs.

Since the early 1990s, up to 40 per cent of local electricity has been generated from hydro-powered turbines. This has not only reduced the cost of electricity but has also reduced our dependence on imported fossil fuels. Our target is to ensure that by 2015 we will be able to provide 100 per cent of our electricity from renewable sources. Over the past 10 years we have been vigorously pursuing the development of geothermal energy. In partnership with the Government of France, the regional councils of Guadeloupe and Martinique and the European Commission, we have been able to complete the first phase of the project.

The next phase, to determine the quality and quantity of the resource, will begin shortly. We look forward to the commercialization phase, when we will

be able to generate electricity not only for our domestic market but also for the neighbouring French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe.

As I indicated earlier, the achievement of the MDGs requires global action. It must be underscored that such action must be premised on strong global partnerships, with a central role for the United Nations. We must therefore continue to work towards the reform of the United Nations. Reform of the Security Council must be addressed urgently so as to ensure that we can create a more democratic institution which reflects the realities of the world today.

Small island developing States must be recognized as a special entity within the United Nations system. Our small geographical size and our small and open economies with a narrow economic base not only leave us susceptible to the vagaries of the international community but limit our policy options in responding to emerging developments. Nonetheless, the Commonwealth of Dominica remains committed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Abubakr Al-Qirbi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Qirbi (Yemen): I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic of Yemen and Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, on this auspicious occasion.

Ten years ago, the world joined its forces here at the United Nations Headquarters to commit itself to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, combating inequalities, ensuring primary education for all, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, strengthening global public health and promoting sustainable development. To that end, a global partnership for development was established to harness global solidarity and promote national and international commitment in favour of development.

The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) represent worthy commitments by the United Nations and its Member States. With less than five years to go until 2015, today's High-level Meeting is a timely opportunity for all of us to highlight effective development strategies and initiatives that can serve as guidelines in our countries and regions, as well as to reflect on shortcomings and challenges that need to be urgently overcome.

Indeed, one of the main goals of this summit is to scale up the global partnership, to mobilize the additional resources urgently needed and to address the remaining gaps and continuing challenges. It is incumbent on all of us to ensure that no country falls short of the MDGs simply because of lack of resources. In this regard, we must be fully committed to assisting those countries that are lagging behind, especially the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States, as well as Africa. The Group of 77 and China believes that a strong global partnership for development should be the centrepiece of international cooperation, with a view to ensuring the timely achievement of the MDGs.

We also must be committed to fulfilling our obligations in conformity with international law through taking further concrete collective action to remove all obstacles to the full realization of the rights of peoples living under foreign occupation, obstacles which continue to adversely affect their economic and social development and which are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be combated and eliminated.

The development challenges that we face today should not be underestimated. We express deep concern over the current multiple interrelated and mutually exacerbating global crises, in particular the world financial and economic crisis, volatile energy prices and the ongoing concern over food security, as well as the challenges posed by climate change, which could further undermine the achievements of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The ongoing world financial and economic crisis has reversed many important development gains in developing countries and threatens to seriously undermine the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Two years after the outbreak of the global financial crisis, developing countries have still not fully recovered from the social and economic effects of the crisis.

We recognize that all developing countries have made significant efforts towards the achievement of the MDGs. Nevertheless, progress has been uneven from country to country and from Goal to Goal. Despite

positive developments, there are still more than 1 billion people living in situations of extreme poverty. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations recently noted a reduction in world hunger, but the numbers of malnourished and undernourished remain staggering. Progress has also been slow in improving in improving maternal health and reducing maternal mortality. Insufficient advances have been made in the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Almost half of the people in developing countries continue to live without access to basic sanitation. Too many people remain jobless or underemployed, and more attention needs to be given to promoting growth and sustainable development.

The Group of 77 and China stress the critical importance of official development assistance both as a complement to other sources of financing and as a catalyst for development, facilitating the achievement of national development objectives, including the MDGs. The global crisis cannot be an excuse for avoiding existing aid commitments. On the contrary, today more than ever, developed countries must meet and scale up their existing bilateral and multilateral official development assistance and aid targets, in particular, the commitment to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries by 2015, and to reach the level of at least 0.5 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance by 2010, along with the target of 0.15 to 0.2 per cent of gross national product for development assistance to the least developed countries.

We confirm the importance of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and underscore the continuing relevance of the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, as well as of the important commitments contained therein. Together, they constitute a coherent development agenda, providing the backbone of international development efforts. We stress that the achievements of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, should continue to be the overarching framework of the development activities of the United Nations system.

The G-77 and China believe that the United Nations, given its universal membership, legitimacy and comprehensive mandate, must play a vital role in the promotion of international cooperation for development and in support of accelerating the implementation of internationally agreed development goals. We stress the pivotal role of the United Nations in promoting coherence and coordination in global economic governance. We stress the need to increase the commitment of the United Nations development system to supporting national efforts to achieve the MDGs. The United Nations needs to strengthen its capabilities and capacities to fully implement its mandate and to ensure the effective delivery of its development activities.

This High-Level Meeting is an important step towards accelerating development efforts and achieving the MDGs, but much more remains to be done. The international community must now focus on implementing agreed commitments and scaling up the global partnership for development. It is clear that economic growth is a critical factor, but that alone cannot overcome the profound structural problems that beset most developing countries. In order to ensure their effectiveness, development strategies must be pursued in the context of a supportive international environment, with global institutions that take full account of the needs of developing countries. We have seen that whatever progress has been made towards meeting the MDGs has been possible only through the combined efforts of national commitment, effective programmes, resources and international support. In order to support the national efforts of developing countries, scaling up the Goals is critically important to the achievement of all MDGs.

The G-77 and China stand ready to do their part to promote development and foster growth in developing countries with a view to ensuring the timely achievement of the MDGs everywhere.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Eminence Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace of the Holy See.

Cardinal Turkson (Holy See): I have the great honour to convey the cordial greetings of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to the Co-Chairs and to the Heads of State and Government assembled here during these days to work together towards a world free of the plague of extreme poverty and to ensure that all children, women and men in every country of the world enjoy the conditions necessary to live their lives

in freedom and dignity. And the Holy Father assures all participants the support of his prayers.

In the year 2000, with the unanimous endorsement of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), all Heads of State at the United Nations acknowledged the international struggle against poverty, and that it could not be limited to the management of the great economic variables, such as finances and foreign debts, commerce and development aid. Rather, the family of nations appreciated the more specifically human aspects of development, such as eradicating hunger, promoting education, providing health care and social services, ensuring equal opportunities for work, and advocating responsible stewardship of the environment.

Although many countries are still far from achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on time, great progress has been made in various ways towards halving the number of people living below the absolute poverty line. This encourages us all to discover the weaknesses, incongruities and conflicts in the programme, to resolve them and so to move on to attain full success.

Indeed, much still needs to be done to maintain and strengthen political mobilization through continued economic and financial solidarity in order to guarantee the availability of resources. In this regard, the Holy See emphasizes the importance of strengthening the global partnership for development, which is a necessary condition for the achievement of all the other Goals, and supports the full and integral compliance of the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development.

All Governments, of developed and developing countries alike, must accept their responsibility to fight corruption, tax evasion and all reprehensible conduct in the areas of business and finance. The rule of law and the promotion of the right to education, job security and basic health care must be upheld.

The campaign for development carried out by international agencies has revealed that success is attributable not so much to economic assistance as it is to creativity, resourcefulness, commitment and the sacrifice of countless small actors, such as the plethora of faith-based organizations. These give life to the expression "small is beautiful", predicted many years ago by economists and strongly inspired by the social teachings of the Church.

For all of these reasons, population policies that violate human dignity do not help the Millennium Development Goals achieve their sublime objectives; still less do they alleviate poverty. I know the poverty of deprivation and exclusion, as an African myself. I have encountered really poor and destitute people in my life and in my ministry as a religious leader, and I would like to ask the international community, especially the developed countries, not to underestimate the resourcefulness of the poor and not to find them burdensome. If we assure poor countries of the effective mainframe of Millennium Development Goal 8, they will assume the shared responsibility and national ownership of achieving the other Goals. The Millennium Development Goals should be used to fight poverty, not to eliminate the poor.

The inherent and equal dignity, individuality and transcendence of each human being must be the foundation of each and every policy on development. In this regard, on the much-debated issue of maternal health, the Holy See respectfully and fervently invites the countries participating in this High-Level Meeting to provide quality resources for the health care needs of mothers and their babies, including the unborn. Moreover, the repeated references in the World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) to sexual and reproductive health and family planning raise deep concerns. These are controversial terms, often interpreted as including access to abortion and methods of family planning that are not in accord with natural law, known by reason.

The family of nations has committed itself to fighting material poverty. This is a key and noble goal to pursue, but in this effort let us never forget that material poverty has partners — relational, emotional and spiritual. The human person must be at the centre of concern in our quest for development. If everyone's political, religious and economic rights and freedoms are respected, we will shift the paradigm from merely trying to manage poverty to creating wealth; from viewing the person as a burden to seeing the person as part of the solution. It is in this conviction that the Holy See desires to collaborate with this summit in the quest for an era of peace, social justice and authentic and holistic human development.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tomáš Dub, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Dub (Czech Republic): It is my honour and pleasure to address this High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to review progress in the fulfilment of the Millennium Declaration, which the Czech Republic fully supports.

We welcome the political will to achieve the MDGs by 2015, which is to be confirmed at the highest level in a declaration at the end of this summit. However, we are convinced that the major task for the forthcoming 2010 — 2015 period will be to create mechanisms that will translate these reconfirmed commitments into reality at the local level.

It is also necessary to regularly update all national development strategies and plans in the light of current realistic statistics and lessons learned, and to integrate them gradually into national legislative systems. We think that all meetings related to the MDGs up to 2015 should focus especially on the exchange of best practices in specific areas.

In any case, innovative approaches leading to the achievement of the MDGs at the national and local levels must be designed from the bottom up on the basis of country-specific facts and holistic, community-led approaches. We therefore appreciate ongoing projects such as, for example, the United Nations Global Compact and the Millennium Village project, which emphasize the involvement of the private sector in supporting the MDGs, not only in financial terms, but also in terms of ensuring decent working conditions and respect for human rights within society.

In addition, non-governmental organizations play an irreplaceable role on the ground. Their experience is very valuable and we should maintain a regular and open dialogue with them.

We are convinced that official development assistance or measures to curb inflation and public debt are not the only way to eradicate poverty. What is needed is a combination of measures encouraging employment, fiscal and monetary stabilization with a countercyclical effect, the mobilization of domestic resources and good governance. We believe that these measures, together with concrete mechanisms of mutual accountability and policy coherence for development, are crucial to the sustainable development of many countries. We have therefore identified these topics as priorities in the new strategies for development cooperation and transition policy of the Czech Republic.

The transition experience gained by the Czech Republic in the recent past gives us a comparative advantage in development issues, as it has been acknowledged even by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Union. Our expertise can help developing countries with creating their public sector reform strategies, building democratic governance and institutions, promoting the rule of law, and in the fight against tax evasion, as well as with other fiscal reform matters.

We believe that transition promotion should be an integral part of the development assistance provided by the international community. The Czech Republic actively contributes to this objective by its efforts undertaken especially in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans.

Last but not least, we believe that social development is a fundamental prerequisite for achieving all MDGs. However, we must approach it from a broader perspective, integrating such sectors as health, education, gender equity, water and sanitation, poverty reduction, nutrition and social protection.

Good governance and respect for human rights are among the main priorities of the development agenda of the Czech Republic. We are determined to advance and support good governance and the rule of law at all levels, as well as solid democratic institutions responsive to the needs of our people based on the key principles of participation, accountability, integrity and transparency. We are convinced that these are essential not only to the achievement of the MDGs but also to sustained, inclusive and equitable development in general.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al-Busaidi, State Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

Mr. Al-Busaidi (Oman): The Millennium Summit held in the year 2000 was a milestone in international cooperation. There, our Heads of State and Government adopted the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), in which they identified eight development goals that, if implemented, would lead to a world with less poverty, hunger and disease, and with greater access to health care and education.

Here we are, 10 years later and five years from the target date, meeting to undertake a comprehensive

review of progress made and to determine what extra measures we could adopt to accelerate action on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) between now and 2015. Success in some areas has put many regions on track. Progress continues to be made in poverty reduction, school enrolment, controlling malaria and HIV, and the provision of safe water resources in rural areas. However, there is a danger that many of the MDG targets may not be met in most regions.

In this time of economic crisis, combating global poverty, disease and inequality is no easy task. The negative impact of natural disasters, epidemics and civil unrest serve to make debt-ridden developing countries poorer still.

The MDGs are the most broadly supported, comprehensive and specific objectives upon which the world has ever agreed. They constitute the most ambitious plan in human history to combat global poverty and produce sustainable progress in the quality of life. It is this global participatory approach that is key. This summit is invaluable in reviewing the progress, achievements and challenges we have faced over the last decade. It is equally important, however, to develop a plan for the coming years in order to ensure that these targets do not become empty idealism.

Moreover, this initiative does not end in 2015. Across the world, progress towards these Goals has been unequal. Politicized aid-giving factionalizes the global community and reduces the MDGs to a cruel charade. We call upon all to do what they can to ensure that development reaches everyone and everywhere. Global partnership is a key tool and an important approach. Donors and recipients must work together with these aims as their common and unifying goal.

The Sultanate of Oman, under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said, continues to achieve positive progress in all of the identified areas in the context of the MDGs. This has had a tangible effect on our society and economy. For example, our mortality rates for infants and children under five per 1,000 live births have fallen by 29 per cent since 1990, while His Majesty's promotion of women to numerous leadership positions in our society has provided a meritocratic example, founded on the basic principle of equality.

I would like to put before the Assembly, however, two challenges for consideration. These challenges are being faced both globally and locally and should be taken into account in our action plan. Non-communicable diseases and road traffic accidents are the cause of almost 60 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively, of premature deaths worldwide. I am sure that members will share our concern at such figures and our desire to approach these issues together.

Resolution 64/255 of 2 of March 2010 proclaimed a Decade of Action for Road Safety. It acknowledged road safety to be a major public health crisis which, if unaddressed, would "hinder progress towards the Millennium Development Goals". Road safety has been overlooked as a contributor to the achievement of the MDGs despite its cross-cutting impact upon six of the MDGs and the fact that it has a key role to play in alleviating poverty.

The attainment of the MDGs is a realistic aim for the future. If politics is the art of the possible, then let us be clear — achieving the MDGs is possible. But this is only the case if we foster a more active global community and a shared humanitarian ethos. To succeed in these intentions, we must reflect on the old saying, "a stranger is a friend I have not yet met". Let us help our friends, let us help strangers and let us help each other.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Max Henderson Hernández, Vice-Minister of Planning of Mexico.

Mr. Hernández (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ten years ago, world political leaders met at the Headquarters of this Organization to express, through the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), their commitment to fighting poverty and hunger and to improving the health and educational conditions of the world's most vulnerable groups.

Five years from the deadline established to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), this Meeting is of the highest relevance because it allows us to assess the progress achieved and the challenges that remain. In particular, it allows us to reiterate our decisive commitment to achieving the Goals.

For Mexico, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is a State commitment. Mexico has therefore taken decisive action, nationally and internationally, to achieve the MDGs, since, even if they are concrete goals that help us to organize our

efforts, they are only a basic framework and the minimum necessary to guarantee that our most vulnerable populations can live better.

We reiterate that the Millennium Development Goals are an integral part of Mexican social policy. The sustainable human development focus of the social programmes of the Government of Mexico emphasizes the relationship between the economic and social spheres. To effectively integrate these two spheres and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, Mexico relies on a "live better" strategy, with the following areas for action.

First is the development of Mexicans' basic skills through programmes on food, health, education, housing and social infrastructure. Second is the consolidation of a social protection network so that Mexicans can face diverse contingencies, such as accidents, diseases or material losses caused by natural disasters. Third is the establishment of bridges that connect social and economic policies, with the aim of increasing Mexicans' capacities and skills so they can be successfully included in economic development.

In this context, Mexico has registered important advances in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It is my pleasure to inform the Assembly that we have achieved the goal set for 2015 of reducing by half the percentage of people with incomes lower than $1 a day. Similarly, Mexico has registered significant progress in the Goals related to primary education for all children and the elimination of gender inequalities in primary and secondary education.

It is my honour to inform the Assembly that, in the framework of the International Year of Youth, Mexico hosted the World Youth Conference from 23 to 27 August. Its outcome, the Guanajuato Declaration, which was endorsed by 112 countries, underlines the importance of the achievement of the MDGs for young people and offers a series of recommendations to address comprehensively and transversally the needs of that population group.

Furthermore, we in Mexico are fully convinced that health is of the utmost importance to every family. We also acknowledge the importance for all Mexicans to be able to receive health services whenever they need them.

From the very start of the millennium, Mexico has offered public insurance that makes health services available to all Mexicans who, for whatever reason, do not contribute or have not contributed to the social security system, recognizing that health is a social right, not a labour right. By 2012, all Mexicans without exception will have access to a doctor, medicine and medical treatment when needed. That is to say, Mexico will achieve universal health coverage, which is a priority of the social policy of President Felipe Calderón. Through this mechanism, we are fighting child and maternal mortality, offering medical care and services to women at risk, starting from the gestational period. In addition, we prevent disease through a universal programme of vaccination for children, which provides more than 98 per cent of children with 15 vaccines, including against pneumococcus and rotavirus.

Mexico, along with many other nations, has registered significant improvements in the treatment of people with HIV/AIDS. Today, we guarantee free universal access to antiretroviral medicines for all Mexicans.

The adverse effects of climate change confirm that we cannot afford the luxury of doing nothing. The costs of not addressing the problem are huge, both in economic and human terms, and they negatively affect the well-being of present and future generations. Mexico will host the sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the sixth Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, from 29 November to 10 December 2010 in Cancún.

Mexico hopes for a successful conference and will do everything possible to facilitate and identify solutions, but we need other countries to do the same. We have begun this task and we have received a very positive message from the international community that we can reach concrete, operational, specific and ambitious results in Cancun. We make an emphatic call to political leaders around the world to find the political will to enable us to take actions of the needed scope.

Moreover, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals it is necessary to move forward in the consolidation of the global partnership for development. Mexico, a determined promoter of

multilateralism in its foreign policy, maintains this goal as a priority. In this regard, Mexico affirms the importance of the agenda set forth in the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, which, in its holistic approach, enumerates conditions necessary to achieve the MDGs.

International cooperation in development must be made more effective through better use of human and financial resources and by promoting positive synergies among various types of technical and scientific cooperation, including traditional, triangular and South-South models of cooperation. Mexico fulfils its part as a committed partner in plans for South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation. We are convinced that our experience in development can be useful to other countries, particularly in the achievement of the MDGs.

Further, Mexico reiterates that trade can and should play an essential role in overcoming poverty and in the attainment of the well-being of nations. It is therefore essential to resist protectionist pressures, particularly those that affect developing countries, to reject all forms of protectionism and to promote investment in trade.

Our country assumes as an obligation its responsibility to contribute to a global aid architecture that is better coordinated and that better promotes development, allowing effective progress towards the full and comprehensive attainment of the MDGs. They are all achievable.

Five years from the deadline, this is without a doubt the moment to redouble our efforts and move forward in building a more unified, inclusive and fair world that is humane and respectful of all rights. Let us put aside doubt and lean into the work of achieving the goals that we have set for ourselves.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by Ms. Caroline Ziade, deputy chair of the delegation of the Lebanese Republic.

Ms. Ziade (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to thank the Co-Chairs for their efforts in this High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, "Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015" (A/64/665).

Inasmuch as the vital lesson to be learned is that political will is needed to turn words into deeds and attain the MDGs by 2015, today's meeting is of particular importance. It must be an opportunity to reaffirm commitments to implement the Goals and to strengthen partnerships among Governments, the private sector and specialized financial institutions.

Like other countries, Lebanon has suffered and continues to suffer from the negative repercussions of climate change, the food crisis and the world financial crisis, as well as from other aspects of globalization, which have widened the gap between the world's rich and poor. My country is committed to taking up these challenges. In the first half of this year, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, we published a report on Lebanon's commitment to the attainment of the MDGs. The report indicates that, overall, Lebanon is on track to implement the MDGs by 2015.

Let me give a few examples. The report shows that Lebanon has managed to reduce the rate of its citizens living in poverty from 27 per cent in 1995 to 8 per cent in 2004. The number of students who have finished primary school rose from 95 per cent in 2001-2002 to 96 per cent in 2005-2006. The report also shows that gender equality, with respect to the level of education of girls, has increased. Still, more effort must be made to achieve equality in the political decision-making process. The number of women parliamentarians at the last elections was no more than six. However, the number of seats won by women in the most recent municipal elections went up slightly, from 1.9 per cent in 2004 to 4.68 per cent in 2009.

Until 2006, Lebanon had been able to make some notable achievements in the area of environmental sustainability, and according to performance indicators in that sphere, it ranked thirty-sixth among 133 countries, and first among Arab countries. But Israel's war against Lebanon in 2006 had devastating effects on the environment and economic and social development. That aggression caused large-scale damage, costing more than $2 billion. Thousands of homes were destroyed, as well as basic infrastructure such as bridges and roads. The bombing of hydroelectric plants and fuelling stations created an environmental disaster,

including an oil spill that spread over 150 kilometres of coastline.

The level of our indebtedness is very high and places a great burden on our treasury. We are trying to reduce the servicing of public debt through various measures, and we have managed to reduce debt-service costs from 18 per cent of GDP in 2000 to 12 per cent in 2008.

In conclusion, we realize that developing countries must make basic structural reforms, build their institutional capacities and develop national strategies to revitalize sustainable development and help to eradicate poverty. But we reaffirm that developed countries should also keep their promises. They should provide financial and technical assistance to help developing countries strengthen their economies, so that the promises will not be vain dreams for the world's poor, mirages that keep receding with every step forward.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): In accordance with resolution 64/184, of 21 December 2009, and decision 65/504, of 20 September 2010, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Barroso (European Union): The new millennium brought with it a great vision and a great goal — to reduce poverty by half by 2015. Never before has humankind set itself such a daunting task, nor such a meaningful one.

Extreme poverty is the most challenging global issue. Our technical progress is mocked when men, women and children are still starving, continue to be vulnerable to HIV infection, are forced to subsist in degraded environments or are unable to exercise the most basic of their human rights. It need not be like this. We must strengthen our collective resolve to confront the social and gender inequalities that lock all too many people into poverty. If developing countries stand by their priorities and developed countries stand by their commitments, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will become millennium development achievements.

The European Union has kept the fight against poverty high on its agenda. European citizens themselves demand this. As the world's leading donor, accounting for more than 50 per cent of all development aid, the European Union has contributed to the achievement of the MDGs from the beginning. Much has been achieved so far. The European Commission alone has helped put 9 million more girls and boys in schools since 2004. We have connected 31 million households to clean drinking water. However, much remains to be done. There is no place for complacency. We must increase our efforts to reach our common objectives over the next five years.

In June of this year, Europe's leaders agreed an ambitious plan that takes things up a gear. It prioritizes action on those goals where we have made least progress and in those regions and countries that are most lagging behind, including those experiencing conflict, crises and fragility of governance. The plan also confirms our commitment to meet the 0.7 per cent gross national income target by 2015 and to assess progress on this every year. My hope is that this will encourage other donors, including emerging partners, to step up their own level of ambition.

The European Union stands with countries in difficulty. We are a reliable partner, even in times of economic downturn. During the food crisis we provided €1.5 billion in additional support through a food facility and a flexibility instrument reaching 50 countries and benefiting 50 million people.

Today, I have come to the General Assembly to reaffirm Europe's commitment to this challenge. I wish to announce that the European Union is ready to offer to the most committed and needy countries an MDG initiative amounting to €1 billion to make progress on those Goals we are furthest from achieving.

We have to produce more effective results, because time is running out. But aid is a catalyst, not a cure. No country has ever been transformed by aid alone. That is why it is also important that our partners take charge of their own development. That means mobilizing domestic policies and resources to support the MDGs. It also means being fully accountable for development results, for the management of aid as well as domestic budgets, and being totally transparent.

We share the responsibility for ensuring success. Just as donors should be held accountable, partner countries should also be accountable for the results they achieve. We owe this to all our fellow human beings fighting to survive on a dollar a day.

We must all act now and in solidarity to make the MDGs a reality by 2015. But halving poverty will only solve half the problem. If we can achieve our goals, an even greater prize will be within our grasp — the ultimate eradication of all poverty in its various manifestations. That is something worth fighting for.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): In accordance with resolution 64/184, of 21 December 2009, and decision 65/504, of 20 September 2010, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. Ihsanoglu (Organization of the Islamic Conference): I am extremely delighted to address this Meeting. I am equally delighted to note that the major objectives of human capital development, which the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) process seeks to achieve, have considerably inspired the economic component of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) 10-year programme of action, which will run its full course in 2015. The welfare of the poor and vulnerable segments of the population of the 57 OIC member States, most of which are developing countries, was foremost in the minds of OIC leaders who adopted the programme at the Mecca summit in December 2005. Poverty remains one of the biggest challenges to the socio-economic development of developing countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

The OIC has undertaken a host of initiatives towards the attainment of the MDGs through a partnership with its member States and affiliated institutions. The Organization has always felt an urgent need to develop interaction among its member States by setting up several relevant mechanisms in various fields for the attainment of goals that are in line with the MDGs.

Given that seven of the eight MDGs are directly related to poverty alleviation — while the eighth calls for a global partnership for development — the OIC Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development provides a $10 billion financing window that serves as a unique example of innovative South-South cooperation. The Fund targets the least developed OIC countries.

Indeed, of the world's 50 least developed countries today, 22 are OIC member States, 18 of them in Africa. In addition, 12 OIC member States in Asia and Africa are landlocked developing countries, while six others in Asia, Africa and the Americas are small island developing countries. Both those groups face unique development challenges because of their geographical limitations and are in dire need for scaled-up targeted development assistance if they are to make progress towards the attainment of the MDGs.

OIC poor countries will benefit from sustained capacity-building assistance for poverty alleviation projects and investment in the development of trade and industry, technology transfers, the cancellation of bilateral and multilateral debt by donor member States and the promotion of the New Partnership for Africa's Development — all of which have been identified as necessary steps for poverty alleviation and economic development.

At the cultural level, the OIC is working hard to disseminate the culture of moderation while combating extremism and terrorism. The OIC was a pioneer in calling for dialogue among civilizations and cultures and for interfaith dialogue, including launching the appeal for historic reconciliation between Islam and Christianity.

In addition to its General Secretariat, the OIC runs different subsidiary organs and affiliated and specialized institutions. In this era of globalization, the OIC mandates encompass all domains, ranging from politics, economics, trade and social and cultural development to education, Islamic jurisprudence and science and technology.

The OIC Special Programme for the Development of Africa is a $12 billion facility aimed at advancing activities favouring the poor. The sectoral priorities under the Programme are specifically geared towards attaining the MDGs and promoting economic growth and regional integration. It focuses, first, on agriculture for food security; secondly, water and sanitation; thirdly, generation and distribution of power; fourthly, transport infrastructure; fifthly, education and, sixthly, eliminating major communicable diseases. A total of 191 operations have been financed in sub-Saharan African countries, with a total value of $1.8 billion.

Significantly, the reinvigorated funding mechanisms under the OIC Islamic Solidarity Fund have created the desired impact in the educational sector. Consequently, the three OIC universities in Bangladesh, Niger and Uganda have continued to prepare youth in OIC member States for development goals.

Let me say at this juncture that the ongoing cooperation between the OIC and the United States Government on the eradication of polio in affected OIC member States has opened up new perspectives for increasing international partnership with OIC countries.

Similarly, the creation by the OIC of an organization for the promotion of the welfare of women in OIC countries is complementary to the ongoing series of activities within the OIC to mainstream women into trade.

Notwithstanding the efforts of OIC in mobilizing support for actions to mitigate the effect of crises, there is a need for global partnership to address the pertinent issues raised by the crises. It that regard, I wish to commend the participation of three OIC countries in the Group of 20 (G-20), which is now preoccupied with the reform of the international financial architecture. We are of the view that wider consultation within the G-20 is necessary so as to reflect the varied financial systems in the world, particularly considering the current mandate of the meeting of central bank governors of OIC countries.

As we continue to concretize our efforts in the next five years towards the realization of these objectives, let me underscore the OIC's unwavering commitment to the MDGs.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): In accordance with 64/184, of 21 December 2009, and decision 65/64, of 20 September 2010, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Anders Johnsson, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Mr. Johnsson (Inter-Parliamentary Union): I bring to this Meeting, at this late hour, the greetings of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, who, as the President of the General Assembly who presided over the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000, much regrets that urgent business prevents him from being with us here today.

A few weeks back, under his leadership, speakers of parliaments from most countries in the world convened in Geneva to attend the third World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. Their parliamentary summit issued a call for securing global democratic accountability for the common good. We have circulated the outcome document, and I commend it to the Assembly's attention. It contains several commitments to strengthen democracy through parliaments, including here at the United Nations.

The speakers of parliament call for an imaginative leap of faith. They emphatically state that today's multilateral systems should allow for much greater consideration for the feelings and aspirations of people everywhere. The speakers call for greater parliamentary involvement in international cooperation to help remedy this deficiency and propose actions to be taken by parliaments and by the IPU in pursuit of this objective.

The speakers' summit had a dual objective: to take stock of progress in developing a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation, and to assess parliamentary involvement in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs, the speakers declared, will not be met without an accompanying sense of accountability. Democracy, security, development, human rights and gender equality are inextricably linked. The speakers pledged to support efforts in parliaments to ensure that the Development Goals are taken into account in their daily work and translated into national programmes and laws. They encouraged all parliaments, when examining draft budgets and bills, to assess their impact on the fulfilment of the MDGs.

Women speakers of parliament who met in Bern on the eve of the parliamentary summit called for stronger efforts at meeting MDGs 4 and 5 and invited all parliaments to join them in implementing the Bern Initiative for Global Parliamentary Action on Maternal and Child Health.

Taking stock of progress, the speakers noted that much work has already been done in parliaments to legislate to make the Goals achievable. Where there has been less progress is in the area of parliamentary oversight and review of progress. Here, there is scope for improvement. It is of course understandable that officials, already burdened by elaborate and time-consuming MDG reporting requirements, might be disinclined to extend the process further by tabling the reports in parliament. However, the investment is well worth it.

At the end of the day, none of the Goals will succeed unless there is broad political support and national ownership. In fact, the only way to forge a truly national agenda is by bringing all parties on

board. The only place where that can be done is parliament. In other words, the fulfilment of the MDGs is also an exercise in democracy.

The work that the IPU and member parliaments have carried out in support of the MDGs over several years, as well as the recent debate among speakers, demonstrate palpable progress on the MDGs — enough to justify a more upbeat mood than in the past. According to the debates, there is universal support for the claim that better oversight of development aid is essential.

Additionally, the trade regime must change. There is no hope for balanced trading conditions when domestic production is still so heavily subsidized in some parts of the world.

Excessive policy conditionality also remains an issue in many countries. Good governance remains key to the success of the MDGs, and good governance correlates positively with development results.

Several delegations present in New York these days include members of parliament. The IPU welcomes this growing practice and encourages other Governments to follow suit. We are meeting with them tomorrow to develop a strategy for ensuring greater parliamentary involvement and active support for attaining the MDGs by 2015. As we do so, we will of course look to the Assembly's outcome document (A/65/L.1) and to the many reports and comparative studies we are ourselves have prepared and circulated in advance of today's summit. But more than anything, we will want to regenerate that very special moment which existed at the turn of the millennium, an extraordinary moment when all the world's leaders congregated in New York to make a commitment to improving the lives of people everywhere, the very people we, as members of parliament, represent. The IPU has a special place in the declaration they adopted on that occasion (resolution 55/2), and we are happy to shoulder the responsibility they have placed on us.

Let me end therefore by making a commitment on behalf of the IPU. We will redouble our efforts to mobilize and assist parliaments in doing their part in attaining the MDGs by 2015. We will also start working with them here and now, so that by the time they meet five years from now, parliaments will be part of the process that will set future development goals. That will be both a political and a practical way to strengthen the role of the United Nations in global governance.

The Co-Chair (Mr. Deiss) (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/184 of 21 December 2009 and decision 65/504 of 20 September 2010, I now give the floor to Ms. Sima Bahous, Assistant Secretary General for Social Affairs of the League of Arab States.

Ms. Bahous (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like, on behalf of the League of Arab States and its Secretary General, Mr. Amre Moussa, to express my gratitude to the United Nations and its specialized agencies for their able efforts to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development and for their support for and cooperation with Arab States, in particular the less developed among them, in various areas of development. I would also express our appreciation to all our international partners who are present today at this important High-level Meeting. We hope the Meeting will be an opportunity to evaluate, objectively and responsibly, our progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We also hope that the Meeting will clarify the steps we need to take to move forward to attain the MDGs by the year 2015 — and, beyond 2015, to achieve sustainability, address future challenges and guarantee a better life for our peoples.

The League of Arab States attaches great importance to the achievement of the MDGs by 2015. Since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the various mechanisms for joint Arab action, such as Arab ministerial councils and specialized Arab organizations, have been establishing strategies, plans and programmes that effectively contribute towards achieving the MDGs on the Arab regional and national levels. An example of Arab leaders' efforts to achieve comprehensive development in the Arab region was the Arab Summit held in Riyadh in 2007, which called for a consultative meeting focusing specifically on economic and social development issues and aiming directly at improving the lives of Arab citizens. Accordingly, the League of Arab States, backed by strong political will, carried out an assessment of the development situation in the Arab region, the level of progress in achieving development goals, the difficulties that development processes as a whole were confronting and various visions and programmes aimed at accelerating the achievement of these goals.

The first Arab Economic, Development and Social Summit, which was held in Kuwait in January 2009, reaffirmed the commitment of the Arab region to the achievement of the MDGs through the Kuwait Declaration and Programme of Action, which outlined a complete vision for setting into motion policies and programmes aimed at social integration, reduction of poverty and unemployment, improving the levels of health care and education, empowering youth, ensuring social equality and empowering women, including increased, effective participation by women in economic, political and social life and an invigorated role for civil society organizations and the private sector. These programmes focused on the less developed Arab States because they are most in need of help in achieving the MDGs by 2015. These programmes are now being implemented on the international and Arab regional levels.

In further pursuit of the efforts of the Arab Summit in these areas, the second Arab development summit will be held in the Arab Republic of Egypt on 19 January 2011 in order in anticipation of 2015 to assess the situation and evaluate our achievements and the difficulties we still confront in the light of new international and regional developments and changes.

In preparation for this High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, through the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers, which is one of the specialized Arab ministerial councils, and in coordination with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, coordinator of the task force on the implementation of the MDGs in the Arab region, as well as specialized United Nations organizations and agencies and members of the task force, prepared the third Arab regional report on the MDGs, for 2010, with particular attention to the effects that the international economic crisis has had on achieving the MDGs.

This report is being submitted to this Meeting as one of several regional reports. It sets out the situation of the Arab region in terms of achieving the MDGs. It emphasizes the interdependence of the MDGs, since interdependence is a very important aspect of strategizing for their attainment, individually and collectively. The report discusses Arab States' varying levels of performance in achieving the Goals, especially the less developed among them.

The report also covers the impact of the international economic crisis on the achievement of the MDGs, especially in the aftermath of the oil crisis, the food crisis and the transformation of the world financial crisis into an economic crisis that has undermined the ability of Arab developing countries to preserve what they had achieved with such great effort. The report also reaffirms the need to intensify efforts aimed at coordination among States of the region and to find innovative and complementary solutions to issues such as employment and investment in human development, with an emphasis on skill-building and the protection of natural resources in the context of addressing environmental and climate challenges.

The Arab report also indicates that poverty has been greatly reduced in most Arab States and that, compared to other States, Arab States still have lower levels of poverty and a medium rate of income inequality. However, despite that success, fighting unemployment and ensuring appropriate employment remain a major challenge, especially since the Arab region has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world. The less developed Arab States are still far from achieving their poverty reduction goals.

Despite the great progress achieved on universal primary education and on the improvement of children's health in the region, there are still some Arab States that are confronting these challenges, which are exacerbated by geographic variations within a single State. Quality of education remains a great challenge, as do the empowerment of women and youth, maternal health and contagious diseases — all of which require attention because they have such crucial importance in combating poverty and achieving the other MDGs.

In general, the Arab region has made tangible progress in achieving the MDGs, but it will be difficult for the less developed Arab States to achieve the Goals by the year 2015, especially in the light of the challenges that they continue to confront along with the Arab region as a whole. Primary among these challenges are poverty, unemployment, gender inequality and the lack of empowerment of women, as well as the Israeli occupation and other strategic and security threats to the Arab world. Those challenges and threats prevent Arab States from achieving the MDGs and impel us to address their root causes, strengthen our efforts to end them and strive, in partnership with the international community, to

finance development projects in the less developed Arab States within the set time frame to which we are all committed.

In conclusion, I express our gratitude to our partners in international and regional organizations for the considerable cooperation that they have provided and continue to provide, and for their support for the initiatives of the League of Arab States. I underscore the importance of providing support and assistance to the less developed Arab States in order to help them achieve the MDGs.

We would also like to stress the vital importance of continuing to strive towards attaining the MDGs in the Arab region, incorporating those Goals into national development strategies and plans and finding the necessary funding mechanisms, in partnership with Arab States and Governments, the private sector, civil society organizations and inter-State partnerships.

We also emphasize the significance of the ongoing cooperation among the League of Arab States, the United Nations and international partners in promoting a global partnership to achieve the MDGs and to ensure peace, security, stability, progress and prosperity for the peoples of the Arab region and the entire world.

The meeting rose at 10.30 p.m.